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RALPH WALDO EMERSON

A
READER'S HISTORY
OF
AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY
THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON
AND
HENRY WALCOTT BOYNTON



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PREFACE

THIS book is based upon a course of lectures delivered during January of 1903 before the Lowell Institute in Boston. Their essential plan was that of concentrating attention on leading figures, instead of burdening the memory with a great many minor names and data. Various hearers, including some teachers of literature, took pains to express their approval of this plan, and to suggest that the material might profitably be cast into book form. This necessarily meant a good deal of revision of a kind which the lecturer did not care to undertake; and he was able to secure the coöperation of a younger associate, to whom has fallen the task of modifying and supplementing the original text, so far as either process was necessary in order to make a complete and consecutive, though still brief, narrative of the course of American

literature. The apparatus necessary for its use as a text-book has been supplied in an appendix, and is believed to be adequate.

It should be said further that the personal reminiscences, and, in general, all passages in which the first person singular is employed, are taken over bodily from the original lectures. Elsewhere the authorship of the book as it stands is a composite, but, it is hoped, not confused affair.

Acknowledgments are due to Messrs. Longmans (of London and New York), who have permitted the use of some passages from *Short Studies of American Authors*, and to Messrs. Harper and Brothers, who consented to similar extracts from a work published by them, entitled *Book and Heart* (New York and London, 1899), both these books being by the senior author of this work.

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A READER'S HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE PURITAN WRITERS

WHEN Shakespeare's Slender in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" claims that his cousin Shallow is a gentleman born, and The Point of View. may write himself *armigero*, he adds proudly, "All his successors, gone before him, have done it, and all his ancestors that come after him may." Slender really builded better than he knew; probably most of the applications at the Heralds' College in London, or at the offices of heraldic engravers in New York, are based on the principle he laid down. Its most triumphant application is that recorded by Gilbert Stuart. While he was in London the painter had a call from an Irishman who had become, through some lucky speculation, the possessor of a castle, and who appealed to Stuart to provide him

with a family portrait gallery. Stuart naturally supposed that there were miniatures or pictures of some kind which he might follow, but on arriving at the castle he found there was nothing of the sort.

“Then how am I to paint your ancestors, if you have no ancestors?” he asked in some indignation.

“Nothing is easier,” said the Irishman; “you have only to paint me the ancestors that I ought to have had.”

The proposal struck Stuart’s sense of humor, and he went to work, soon producing a series of knights in armor, judges in bushy wigs, and fine ladies with nosegays and lambs, to the perfect satisfaction of his patron. Here was Slender’s fine conception literally carried out; the ancestors came afterward because their enterprising successor had gone before.

Something like this method has been employed by many chroniclers of American literature. Perceiving that America has produced much that is creditable during the past century, they have set about finding a direct American pedigree for it. Yet they would readily agree that almost nothing which has attained permanent fame was writ-

ten in America before the nineteenth century ; and they would not deny that, so far as its form, at least, is concerned, most of our later literature confesses an English ancestry.

But if the spirit of those older writers, the writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was American, what does the form of their writing matter? American-ism.

The answer to this question depends upon what we mean by Americanism. Until the very outbreak of the Revolution there were few persons in the American colonies who were not, in sentiment as well as in mental inheritance, English. England was "home" to them, as it is now to the British Canadian or Australian. Circumstances were of course bringing about a gradual divergence in manners and in special sympathies between the colonist of Massachusetts or Virginia and the Englishman of London. Even the shock of the Revolution could, so far as literature was concerned, only hasten that divergence of type — not transform it into a difference of type. To this day, indeed, the course of that divergence has been so slow that we still find Mr. Howells uttering the opinion, not quite justly, that American literature is merely "a condition of English literature."

It would be a remarkable fact if America had, in so short a time, created an altogether new and distinct type of literature. What

American Literature. Fisher Ames said nearly a century ago is still true : “ It is no reproach to the genius of America, if it does not produce ordinarily such men as were deemed the prodigies of the ancient world. Nature has provided for the propagation of men — giants are rare ; and it is forbidden by her laws that there should be races of them.” Probably no more wholesome service can now be done to the elementary study of the literature of the United States than by directing it toward the sane and cheerful recognition of the close relation which has always existed between American writing and English writing ; and toward a careful weighing of the American authors in whom we properly take pride, upon the same scales which have served us in determining the value of British authors.

With such ends in view, the present book will attempt, not to be a literary history of America, but simply to give a connected account of the pure literature which has been produced by Americans. It will not assume to be in any sense a minute literary cyclopædia

of this work, but will rather attempt to select, as time selects, the best or representative names of each period in its course. The intrinsic literary importance of these writers will be considered, rather than their merely historical importance. Many minor names, therefore, which might properly be included in a summary of respectable books hitherto produced in America are here omitted altogether; and others are given such minor mention as their literary merit appears to warrant.

But it is time, you may say, to define more specifically what literature is. No definition of it ever yet given has surpassed *Pure Literature* that magnificent Latin sentence of *ature*.

Bacon's which one marvels never to have seen quoted among the too scanty evidences that he wrote the works attributed to Shakespeare :—

“ It [literature] hath something divine in it, because it raises the mind and hurries it into sublimity, by conforming the show of things to the desires of the soul, instead of subjecting the soul to external things, as reason and history do.” (*De Augmentis*, Book ii.)

It is only literature then, in Bacon's definition, which truly “ raises the mind and hurries it into sublimity.” All else is reason (or reasoning) and history (or narrative).

Where does literature find its source? Not in thought or feeling alone, else we should look to the cradle for our literature. Not even in the first impulses of speech; the cradle supplies those, and so, in maturer life, do the street, the railway, the shop. Mere language is not a deliberate creation, but begins in an impulse; and those who, like Emerson, have excelled in its use have long since admitted that language, as such, is the product of the people at large, not of the student. But the word "literature" implies that another step has been taken. Language is but the instrument of literature. Literature involves not merely impulse, but structure; it goes beyond the word and reaches "the perfection and precision of the instantaneous line." Its foundation is thought, but it goes farther and seeks to utter thought in continuous and symmetrical form. We must pass beyond the vivid phrase to the vivid line. Thought, emotion, the instinct toward expression — the whole personality of the man and his skill as an artist — must work together in perfect adjustment, in order to gain this end. Very few men are both strong and skillful enough for this; and that is why,

out of the great mass of written and printed matter which the world produces, so little is worth preserving in the treasury of pure literature.

In proceeding with our account of American literature, then, we shall try to keep ourselves within the boundary here set. We shall find occasion from time to time to suggest the historical importance of an author or a book, but the final judgment on them will be based upon their relation to literature. Such an account may properly begin with a consideration of the germs or fragments of pure literature which were produced in America before, with Franklin, what we may now more properly call American Literature began.

The earliest writing done in America was the work of persons who not only were of English birth, but whose stay in The Early America was comparatively short. Colonists.

Captain John Smith was the first American colonist to write a book, "A True Relation of Virginia." It was a brilliant and vigorous piece of narrative, and was followed before his return to England by two other books of merit. But it is only in a historical sense that

we can call him one of the "fathers of American literature."¹ He was, in fact, a sturdy and accomplished Englishman of the best Elizabethan type. The famous story of his rescue by Pocahontas apparently represents the instinctive effort of a gallant gentleman-adventurer with a turn for expression to embellish his bluff narrative with a romantic incident.

The first person of professedly literary pursuits to come to America was George Sandys, already a poet of recognized standing when, in 1621, he crossed the ocean as an official under the Governor of Virginia. The first five books of his translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" had just been published in England, and had been received with enthusiasm. On his departure for America he was sped by a rhymed tribute from Michael Drayton, exhorting him to go on with the same work in Virginia:—

"Entice the Muses thither to repair;
Entreat them gently; train them to that air,"

he urges. It was a rude air. To the ordinary privations of the pioneer, and the wearing routine of official duties, were added the

¹ Tyler, *History of American Literature*, i. p. 7.

sudden horrors of the James River massacre (March, 1622), and the stress of the troubled days which followed. Yet when Sandys returned to England in 1625, he brought with him the ten books which completed his version of the "Metamorphoses." This translation lived to be much admired by Dryden and Pope, and, what is more important, undoubtedly had great influence upon their method of versification. The not altogether admirable distinction, therefore, belongs to Sandys of having laid the foundation for the form of heroic couplet which became a blight upon English poetry in the eighteenth century. At all events, the accident of his having lived for a time in America gives us a very shadowy claim upon him as an American writer.

Even from the point of view of the literary historian, the work of Sandys is of little significance. It does not appear that he influenced later American writing, good or bad. The situation is very different with Anne Bradstreet, who, indeed, represents a second step toward a type of writing which should be in some sense American in quality as well as in birthplace. Though born in England, she became abso-

Anne Bradstreet.

lutely identified with American thought and life, exerted an immense influence in her day, and was the ancestor of five especially intellectual families in New England, counting among her descendants William Ellery Channing, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Richard Henry Dana, Wendell Phillips, and Andrews Norton. She was born in 1612 of Puritan stock, her father being steward of the estates of the Puritan nobleman, the Earl of Lincoln. She was married at sixteen and came to America with her husband, Governor Bradstreet, in 1630. It is evident that, in spite of her Puritan sense of duty, she could not leave England for the raw life of the colonies without a pang. "After a time," she wrote many years later, "I changed my condition and was married, and came into this country, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it." She was of delicate constitution and refined instincts, and was to become the mother of eight children. Yet most of her poems were written before she was thirty years old, in the midst of the daily toils of the wife of a New England

THE TENTH MUSE

Lately sprung up in AMERICA
OR

Severall Poems, compiled
with great variety of Wit
and Learning, full of delight.

Wherein especially is contained a com-
pleat discourse and description of

The Four { Elements,
Constitutions,
Ages of Man,
Seasons of the Year.

Together with an Exact Epitomie of
the Four Monarchies, viz.

The { Assyrian,
Persian,
Grecian, *These three*
Roman.

Also a Dialogue between Old England and
New, concerning the late troubles.

With divers other pleasant and serious Poems.

By a Gentlewoman in those parts.

Printed at London for Samuel Bontell at the signe of the
Bible in Pines-Heed-Alley, 1650.

farmer, and under her rapidly increasing burden of motherhood. Her work at once gained such attention that she was called "a tenth muse" by her contemporaries. Her poems were published in London in 1650 under a title which gives a tabular view of her range of thought and knowledge, being as follows: "The Tenth Muse, lately sprung up in America, or Several Poems Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning, Full of Delight, Wherein especially is Contained a Complete Discourse and Description of the Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year, together with an exact Epitome of the Four Monarchies, viz., The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman. Also a Dialogue between Old England and New, concerning the late troubles. With divers other pleasant and serious Poems. By a Gentlewoman in those parts." (London, 1650.)

Her name could not be properly mentioned here if her poems were not shorter than her title-pages, which possibly got intertangled with the messages of her husband, the governor. Her poetry would not now be considered great, or in fact readable, except by

the special student, though it is in no way behind that of the most distinguished English poetess of the same period, Mrs. Katharine Phillips. Yet Cotton Mather said of her works that "they would outlast the stateliest marble," and other admirers "weltered in delight" or were "sunk in a sea of bliss" on reading them. Her literary taste was, like that of other Puritans, fatally compromised by religious prejudice. Shakespeare and the other robust Elizabethan spirits were an abomination to her; and she readily fell under the influence of "fantastic" poets like Herbert, Quarles, and Du Bartas, upon whom she formed her own style. It is on the whole remarkable that she should have been able now and then to free herself from these chosen fetters, and speak her own heart in really simple and noble verse.

Her "Contemplations," not published until after her death, contain verses which suggest that Spenser might have been her master, and require no apology. This is true, for instance, of her poem upon "The Seasons": —

"When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth (though old) still clad in green,

The stones and trees, insensible of time,
 Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen.
 If winter come, and greenness then do fade,
 A Spring returns, and they more youthful made ;
 But Man grows old, lies down, remains where once he 's
 laid.

“ Shall I then praise the heavens, the trees, the earth,
 Because their beauty and their strength last longer ?
 Shall I wish there, or never, to had birth,
 Because they 're bigger and their bodies stronger ?
 Nay, they shall darken, perish, fade, and die,
 And when unmade so ever shall they lie ;
 But man was made for endless immortality.

“ O Time, the fatal wrack of mortal things,
 That draws oblivion's curtains over kings ;
 Their sumptuous monuments, men know them not,
 Their names without a record are forgot,
 Their parts, their ports, their pomp 's all laid in th' dust,
 Nor wit nor gold, nor buildings 'scape time's rust ;
 But he whose name is grav'd in the white stone
 Shall last and shine when all of these are gone.”

Anne Bradstreet had the most genuinely poetic gift among our Puritan writers of verse. These formed, however, a surprisingly large class. “ Lady Mary Montagu said that in England, in her time, verse-making had become as common as taking snuff ; in New England, in the age before that, it had become much more common than taking snuff

— since there were some who did not take snuff.”¹ The New England divine, who had a horror of fine art, could not keep his hand from the making of bad verses. It was, to be sure, a sort of poetry in Sunday clothes which he allowed himself to cultivate. He loved to record his religious fears and ecstasies in thumping doggerel, and to set his grim sermons to a taking jingle.

The writer who better than Anne Bradstreet or any one else represents this class, Michael Wig- is Michael Wigglesworth (1631–glesworth. 1705). His most famous work was “The Day of Doom ; or, A Poetical Description of the great and last Judgment.” A sufficient taste of its quality may be given by quoting the last words of the verdict upon those who have died in infancy : —

“A crime it is ; therefore in bliss
You may not hope to dwell ;
But unto you I shall allow
The easiest room in Hell.”

A generation which found it possible to accept such a passage without feeling it to be either revolting or ridiculous, could not be expected to produce real poetry. This

¹ Tyler, ii. p. 267.

poem, published about 1660, had, it has been claimed, "a popularity far exceeding that of any other work, in prose or verse, produced in America before the Revolution." It had, indeed, far greater temporary fame than "Paradise Lost," which was written at about the same time by the veritable poet of Puritanism, John Milton.

The literary instinct of New England Puritanism by no means exhausted itself in verse. In prose as well as in poetry the Puritan most effective work of the period Prose. was the product of Puritan zeal and Puritan narrowness. Two names stand out prominently as representative of this school of prose writing, mighty names in their day which have not yet ceased to echo in our memories: those of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards.

Cotton Mather was born in 1663, the third and greatest of the four Mathers who morally and intellectually dominated Cotton America for more than a century. Mather. From his cradle he was petted and flattered into what his best critic calls "a vast literary and religious coxcomb." He was a Harvard freshman at eleven, a Master of Arts at eigh-

teen. At twenty-two, as assistant to his distinguished father, he had entered the pastorate of the North Church of Boston, in which he remained until his death in 1728. All that was most acute, most pedantic, most rigid in the Puritan faith and practice appeared to be embodied in him. He fasted, he forced himself to incredible feats of mental endurance, he deliberately cultivated a habit of decorating the simplest experiences of life with pious reflections: "When he washed his hands, he must think of the clean hands, as well as pure heart, which belong to the citizens of Zion." . . . "Upon the sight of a tall man, he said, 'Lord, give that man high attainments in Christianity; let him fear God above many.' " More characteristic than either of these instances, perhaps, is his remark on the occasion of "a man going by without observing him, 'Lord, I pray thee help that man to take a due notice of Christ.' "

He was an extraordinarily voluminous writer. He published fourteen books in one year, and a list of his known publications contains three hundred and eighty-three titles. Most of these titles, like a large part of his writing, are fearfully and wonderfully made:

The Wonders of the Invisible World.

OBSERVATIONS

As well *Historical* as *Theological*, upon the NATURE, the
NUMBER, and the OPERATIONS of the

DEVILS.

Accompany'd with,

- I. Some Accounts of the Grievous Molestations, by DÆMONS and WITCHCRAFTS, which have lately annoy'd the Countrey; and the Trials of some eminent *Malefactors* Executed upon occasion thereof: with several Remarkable *Curiosities* therein occurring.
- II. Some Counsils Directing a due Improvement of the terrible things, lately done, by the Unusual & Amazing Range of EVIL-SPIRITS, in Our Neighbourhood: & the methods to prevent the *Wrongs* which those *Evil Angels* may intend against all sorts of people among us; especially in Accusations of the Innocent.
- III. Some Conjectures upon the great EVENTS, likely to befall, the WORLD in General, and NEW-ENGLAND in Particular; as also upon the Advances of the TIME, when we shall see BETTER DAYES.
- IV A short Narrative of a late Outrage committed by a knot of WITCHES in *Swedeland*, very much Resembling, and so far Explaining, *That* under which our parts of *America* have laboured!
- V. THE DEVIL DISCOVERED: In a Brief Discourse upon those TEMPTATIONS, which are the more Ordinary *Devices* of the Wicked One.

By Cotton Mather.

Boston Printed by Benj. Harris for Sam. Phillips. 1693.

“Christianus per Ignem; or, a Disciple Warming of Himself and Owning his Lord;” “Nails Fastened; or, Proposals of Piety Complied Withal;” and so on. No theme appeared to be simple enough for Cotton Mather to treat simply; and in consequence most of his work is now dead. Even that greatest book of his, the formidable “*Magnalia Christi Americana*,”¹ can now be read only by the special student of history. “He was,” says Professor Tyler, “the last, the most vigorous, and therefore the most disagreeable representative of the fantastic school in literature; he prolonged in New England the methods of that school even after his most cultivated contemporaries there had outgrown them, and had come to dislike them. The expulsion of the beautiful from thought, from sentiment, from language; a lawless and a merciless fury for the odd, the disorderly, the grotesque, the violent; strained analogies, unexpected images, pedantries, indelicacies, freaks of allusion, monstrosities of phrase;—these are the traits of Cotton Mather’s writing,

¹ Its sub-title was *The Ecclesiastical History of New England from its first planting, in the year 1620, unto the year of our Lord 1698*. It was first published in London in 1702.

even as they are the traits common to that perverse and detestable literary mood that held sway in different countries of Christendom during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its birthplace was Italy; New England was its grave; Cotton Mather was its last great apostle."

However true this may be of Mather at his worst, it is certain that at times he did succeed, like Anne Bradstreet, in forgetting his artifice, and in producing passages of noble prose. Professor William James, after quoting that exquisite passage in which Cotton Mather bids farewell to his young wife, lying dead in the house with her two young children, also dead, finds in it "the impulse to sacrifice" only. We may see in it also the impulse to expression which, ultimately developed, creates literature. Professor Wendell says truly of Mather that he frequently wrote "with a rhythmical beauty which recalls the enthusiastic spontaneity of Elizabethan English, so different from the English which came after the Civil War." It is when a Puritan clergyman ceases to be theological that he is most apt to touch our hearts and delight our ears. We find in Mather, for

instance, this rhythmical beauty when he describes the career of Thomas Shepard, the first minister of Cambridge, as “a trembling walk with God,” or gives this picture (1702) of what he calls “The Conversation of Gentlemen :” —

“There seems no need of adding anything but this, that when gentlemen occasionally meet together, why should not their conversation correspond with their superior station? Methinks they should deem it beneath persons of their quality to employ the conversation on trifling impertinences, or in such a way that, if it were secretly taken in shorthand, they would blush to hear it repeated. ‘Nothing but jesting and laughing, and words scattered by the wind.’ Sirs, it becomes a gentleman to entertain his company with the finest thoughts on the finest themes; and certainly there cannot be a subject so worthy of a gentleman as this — What good is there to be done in the world? Were this noble subject more frequently started in the conversation of gentlemen, an incredible good might be done.”

Beyond the fact that they were both ardent defenders of the Calvinistic doctrine, Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather had really very little in common, as to either character or experience. Edwards was modest and gentle in character, and simple to the point of bareness in style; and life was not arranged very smoothly for him.

Jonathan Edwards was born, the son of a Connecticut minister, in 1703. He took his degree at Yale in 1720, and there-
Jonathan Edwards. after became college tutor, minister at Northampton, missionary to the Stockbridge Indians, and finally president of Princeton College. He died in 1758. As a child he showed ability in mental science and divinity. At twelve he displayed the acuteness and courtesy in speculative controversy which were to be his lifelong characteristics. Until he had fairly entered the ministry he manifested just as keen interest and intelligence in other fields. At seventeen he had somehow evolved a system of idealistic philosophy much like that which Berkeley was to make famous a few years later. In physics and astronomy, also, he had, before the end of his tutorship at Yale, recorded speculative theories very far in advance of his time. Yet at twenty-four he deliberately cast all this intellectual activity behind him, to devote himself for the rest of his life to the championship of a rigid and belated system of theology. The doctrines that in the handling of Wigglesworth and Mather had often been grotesque, became terrific when

submitted to the calm and relentless logic of Edwards. Accepting without question the stern tenets of his inherited faith, he set himself the task of giving them their full logical development. He was not an orator, but his directness and earnestness gave him astonishing power over his audiences. Many passages from his sermons are almost too terrible to quote: "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; . . . he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. . . . You are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful, venomous serpent is in ours." It is one of the strangest of facts, only to be accounted for on the ground of that form of insanity which is called bigotry, that so acute a mind and so gentle a heart should have bent themselves to the enunciation of a creed so blind and so brutal.

No modern audience could now hear, without a shudder amounting to detestation, some of those pages in the sermons of Jonathan Edwards by which he felt himself to be best

serving God and man; but Jonathan Edwards wrote literature when, in 1725, at the age of twenty-two, he inscribed on the blank leaf of a book this description of Sarah Pierrepont, afterwards his wife: —

“ They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on him — that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and

no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her."

This may fairly be called the high-water mark of Puritan prose.

CHAPTER II

THE SECULAR WRITERS

So far we have had to do with the strictly Puritan period of Colonial writing. The clergy were still for a long time to produce much of the best work; but by the beginning of the eighteenth century took place that rise of the secular instinct which found its best expression somewhat later in Franklin; the humane instinct from which an essential part of any strong national literature must spring. At this particular period the impulse expressed itself in three principal forms: the almanac, the diary, and the humorous or satirical poem.

The most striking of the early diarists was Madam Sarah Kemble Knight, who was born in Boston in 1666, taught school there, was reputed excellent as a teacher of English composition, and in 1706 was the instructor of Benjamin Franklin. Her account of a journey on horseback from

Boston to New Haven gives us an excellent impression of rustic Colonial life on its homely side. It began on Monday, October 2, 1704, and occupied five days; and the amusing diary was written at odd moments during the journey. A kinsman rode with her as far as Dedham, where she went, as was apparently the custom in that period, to the minister's house to wait for the stage. She declined to stay there over night, but was escorted by Madam Belcher, the minister's wife, to the tavern to seek for a guide. The tavern-keeper's son offered his services, and she thus proceeds: —

“ Upon this, to my no small surprise, son John arose [the landlord's son], and gravely demanded what I would give him to go with me? ‘Give you?’ says I, ‘are you John?’ ‘Yes,’ says he, ‘for want of a better;’ and behold! this John looked as old as my host, and perhaps had been a man in the last century. ‘Well, Mr. John,’ says I, ‘make your demands.’ ‘Why, half a piece of eight and a dram,’ says John. I agreed, and gave him a dram (now) in hand to bind the bargain.

“ My hostess catechised John for going so cheap, saying his poor wife would break her heart . . . [Here half a page of manuscript is gone.] His shade on his horse resembled a globe on a gate post. His habit, horse and furniture, its looks and goings incomparably answered the rest.

“ Thus jogging on with an easy pace, my guide telling me it was dangerous to ride hard in the night (which his horse had the sense to avoid), he entertained me with the adventures he had passed by late riding, and imminent dangers he had escaped, so that, remembering the heroes in ‘ Parismus ’ and the ‘ Knight of the Oracle,’ I did n’t know but I had met with a prince disguised.

“ When we had rid about an hour, we came into a thick swamp, which by reason of a great fog, very much startled me, it being now very dark. But nothing dismayed John ; he had encountered a thousand and a thousand such swamps, having a universal knowledge in the woods ; and readily answered all my inquiries, which were not a few.

“ In about an hour, or something more, after we left the swamp, we came to Billings’s, where I was to lodge. My guide dismounted and very complacently helped me down and showed me the door, signing to me with his hand to go in ; which I gladly did — but had not gone many steps into the room, ere I was interrogated by a young lady I understood afterwards was the eldest daughter of the family, with these, or words to this purpose ; viz., ‘ Law for me ! — what in the world brings you here at this time of night ? I never see a woman on the road so dreadful late in all the days of my ’versal life. Who are you ? Where are you going ? I ’m scared out of my wits ! ’ — with much more of the same kind. I stood aghast, preparing to reply, when in comes my guide — to him madam turned, roaring out : ‘ Lawful heart, John, is that you ? — how de do ! Where in the world are you going with this woman ? Who is she ? ’ John made no answer, but sat

down in the corner, fumbled out his black junk, and saluted that instead of Deb ; she then turned again to me and fell anew into her silly questions, without asking me to sit down.

“ I told her she treated me very rudely, and I did not think it my duty to answer her unmannerly questions. But to get rid of them, I told her I came there to have the post’s company with me to-morrow on my journey, etc. Miss stared awhile, drew a chair, bade me sit, and then ran up stairs and put on two or three rings (or else I had not seen them before), and returning, set herself just before me, showing the way to Reding, that I might see her ornaments, perhaps to gain the more respect. But granam’s new rung sow, had it appeared, would have affected me as much. I paid honest John with money and dram according to contract, and dismissed him, and prayed Miss to show me where I must lodge. She conducted me to a parlor in a little back lean-to, which was almost filled with the bedstead, which was so high that I was forced to climb on a chair to get up to the wretched bed that lay on it ; on which having stretched my tired limbs, and laid my head on a sad-colored pillow, I began to think on the transactions of the past day.”

Contemporary with Madam Knight was Judge Samuel Sewall, one of the raciest autobiographers since Pepys. He will Samuel Sewall. be remembered mainly for his diary, but not seldom struck a genuine literary note elsewhere ; as when he describes the farms and marshes on the Merrimac : —

“As long as Plum Island shall faithfully keep the commanded post, notwithstanding all the hectoring words and hard blows of the proud and boisterous ocean; as long as any salmon or sturgeon shall swim in the streams of Merrimac, or any perch or pickerel in Crane Pond; as long as the sea-fowl shall know the time of their coming, and not neglect seasonably to visit the places of their acquaintance; as long as any cattle shall be fed with the grass growing in the meadows, which do humbly bow down themselves before Turkey-Hill; as long as any sheep shall walk upon Old-Town Hills, and shall from thence pleasantly look down upon the River Parker, and the fruitful marshes lying beneath; as long as any free and harmless doves shall find a white oak or other tree within the township, to perch, or feed, or build a careless nest upon, and shall voluntarily present themselves to perform the office of gleaners after the barley-harvest; as long as Nature shall not grow old and dote, but shall constantly remember to give the rows of Indian corn their education by pairs; so long shall Christians be born there, and being first made meet, shall from thence be translated to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

His diary, like the diaries of Evelyn and Pepys, was intended only for the writer. Samuel Sewall was born in England in 1652, but came to America with his parents when a child and graduated at Harvard in 1671, at nineteen. Till 1730 he was a conspicuous leader in the Massachusetts Colony, and was

the only one of the judges concerned in the witchcraft trial who made public confession in later life, standing before the congregation to own that he had been wrong in his rulings, and spending one day in each of the remaining thirty-nine years of his life in fasting and prayer for the wrong he had done. In 1700 he wrote a tract against African slavery. In his diary he often wrote with energy and power, but never so quaintly as in describing his love affairs, if such they may be called, with Puritan ladies, in the effort to secure a third wife. His second having died on May 26, 1720, he proceeded Oct. 1 (four months later) to make overtures for a third:—

8r. 1. [1720] Saturday, I dine at Mr. Stoddard's: from thence I went to Madam Winthrop's just at 3. Spake to her, saying, my loving wife died so soon and suddenly, 't was hardly convenient for me to think of marrying again; however I came to this resolution, that I would not make any court to any person without first consulting with her. Had a pleasant discourse about 7 (seven) single persons sitting in the Fore-seat 7r. 29th, viz. Madm Rebekah Dudley, Catharine Winthrop, Bridget Usher, Deliverance Legg, Rebekah Loyd, Lydia Colman, Elizabeth Bellingham. She propounded one and another for me; but none would do, said Mrs. Loyd was about her age. [Mrs. Winthrop herself was

at this time fifty-six and had had twelve children ; Judge Sewall was sixty-eight and had had fourteen, of whom only three survived him.]

Octobr. 3. Waited on Madam Winthrop again ; 't was a little while before she came in. . . . Then I usher'd in discourse from the names in the Fore-seat ; at last I pray'd that Catharine [Mrs. Winthrop] might be the person assign'd for me. She instantly took it up in the way of denial, as if she had catch'd at an opportunity to do it, saying she could not do it before she was asked. Said that was her mind unless she should change it, which she believed she should not ; could not leave her children. I express'd my sorrow that she should do it so speedily, pray'd her consideration, and ask'd her when I should wait on her again. She setting no time, I mention'd that day sennight. Gave her Mr. Willard's Fountain Open'd with the little print and verses ; saying, I hop'd if she did well read that book, we should meet together hereafter, if we did not now. She took the book, and put it in her pocket. Took leave.

8r. 6th. A little after 6 P. M. I went to Madam Winthrop's. She was not within. I gave Sarah Chickering the maid 2 s., Juno, who brought in wood, 1 s. Afterward the nurse came in, I gave her 18 d., having no other small bill. . . . Madam seem'd to harp on the same string. Must take care of her children ; could not leave that house and neighborhood where she had dwelt so long. I told her she might do her children as much or more good by bestowing what she laid out in house-keeping, upon them. Said her son would be of age the 7th of August. I said it might be inconvenient for her to dwell with her daughter-in-law, who must be

mistress of the house. I gave her a piece of Mr. Belcher's cake and ginger-bread wrapped up in a clean sheet of paper : told her of her father's kindness to me when Treasurer, and I Constable. My daughter Judith was gone from me and I was more lonesome — might help to forward one another in our journey to Canaan.

In the evening I visited Madam Winthrop, who treated me with a deal of courtesy ; wine, marmalade. . . .

8r. 11th, 1720. I writ a few Lines to Madam Winthrop to this purpose : "Madam, These wait on you with Mr. Mayhew's Sermon, and Account of the state of the Indians on Martha's Vineyard. I thank you for your unmerited favours of yesterday ; and hope to have the happiness of waiting on you to-morrow before eight o'clock after Noon. I pray God to keep you, and give you a joyful entrance upon the two hundred and twenty-ninth year of Christopher Columbus his Discovery ; and take leave, who am, Madam, your humble Servt. S. S."

8r. 12. Mrs. Anne Cotton came to door ('t was before 8.) said Madam Winthrop was within, directed me into the little room, where she was full of work behind a stand ; Mrs. Cotton came in and stood. Madam Winthrop pointed to her to set me a chair. Madam Winthrop's countenance was much changed from what 't was on Monday, look'd dark and lowering. At last, the work, (black stuff or silk) was taken away, I got my chair in place, had some converse, but very cold and indifferent to what 't was before. Ask'd her to acquit me of rudeness if I drew off her glove. Enquiring the reason, I told her 't was great odds between handling

a dead goat and a living lady. Got it off. I told her I had one petition to ask of her, that was, that she would take off the negative she laid on me the third of October; She readily answer'd she could not, and enlarg'd upon it; . . . Told her the reason why I came every other night was lest I should drink too deep draughts of pleasure. She had talk'd of Canary, her kisses were to me better than the best Canary. . . .

8r. 19. Midweek. . . . Was courteous to me; but took occasion to speak pretty earnestly about my keeping a coach: I said 't would cost £100. per annum: she said 'twould cost but £40. . . .

8r. 20. Madam Winthrop not being at Lecture, I went thither first; found her very serene with her daughter Noyes, Mrs. Dering, and the widow Shipreeve sitting at a little table, she in her arm'd chair. She drank to me, and I to Mrs. Noyes. After awhile pray'd the favour to speak with her. She took one of the candles, and went into the best room, clos'd the shutters, sat down upon the couch. She told me Madam Usher had been there, and said the coach must be set on wheels, and not by rusting. She spake something of my needing a wig. Ask'd me what her sister said to me. I told her, She said, If her sister were for it, she would not hinder it. . . .

She receiv'd me courteously. I ask'd when our proceedings should be made public: She said They were like to be no more public than they were already. Offer'd me no wine that I remember. I rose up at 11 o'clock to come away, saying I would put on my coat, she offer'd not to help me. I pray'd her that Juno might light me home, she open'd the shutter, and said

'twas pretty light abroad ; Juno was weary and gone to bed. So I came home by starlight as well as I could.

October 24. . . . Told her I had an antipathy against those who would pretend to give themselves ; but nothing of their estate. I would a proportion of my estate with my self. And I supposed she would do so. As to a Perriwig, My best and greatest Friend, I could not possibly have a greater, began to find me with hair before I was born, and had continued to do so ever since ; and I could not find in my heart to go to another.

Nov. 2. Midweek, went again and found Mrs. Alden there, who quickly went out. Gave her about $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of sugar almonds, cost 3s. per £. Carried them on Monday. She seem'd pleas'd with them, ask'd what they cost. Spake of giving her a hundred pounds per annum if I died before her. Ask'd her what sum she would give me, if she should die first? Said I would give her time to consider of it.

Novr. 4th. Friday. I ask'd her Whereabout we left off last time ; mention'd what I had offered to give her ; Ask'd her what she would give me ; She said she could not change her condition : She has said so from the beginning ; could not be so far from her children, the Lecture. Quoted the Apostle Paul affirming that a single life was better than a married. I answer'd That was for the present distress.

. . . Found her rocking little Katy in the cradle. I excus'd my coming so late (near eight). She set me an armed chair and cushion ; and so the cradle was between her arm'd chair and mine. Gave her the remnant of my almonds ; She did not eat of them as before ; but laid them away ; I said I came to enquire

whether she had alter'd her mind since Friday, or remained of the same mind still. She said, Thereabouts. I told her I loved her, and was so fond as to think that she loved me; she said had a great respect for me. I told her, I had made her an offer, without asking any advice; she had so many to advice with, that 't was an hindrance. The fire was come to one short brand besides the block, which brand was set up in end; at last it fell to pieces, and no recruit was made: She gave me a glass of wine. I think I repeated again that I would go home and bewail my rashness in making more haste than good speed. I would endeavour to contain myself, and not to go on to solicit her to do that which she could not consent to. Took leave of her. As came down the steps she bid me have a care. Treated me courteously. Told her she had enter'd the 4th year of her widowhood. I had given her the News-Letter before: I did not bid her draw off her glove as sometime I had done. Her dress was not so clean as sometime it had been. *Jehovah jireh!* ["The Lord will provide."]

Midweek, 9r. 9. Dine at Bror. Stoddard's: were so kind as to enquire of me if they should invite Mm. Winthrop; I answer'd *No*.

About the middle of Decr. Madam Winthrop made a treat for her children; Mr. Sewall, Prince, Willoughby: I knew nothing of it; but the same day abode in the Council Chamber for fear of the rain, and din'd alone upon Kilby's pies and good beer.

In less than a year later, he called on Madam Ruggles, another widow, and says in his diary, "I showed my willingness to

renew my old acquaintance [as a suitor]; she expressed her inability to be serviceable. Gave me cider to drink. I came home." Eight months later he married Mrs. Mary Gibbs, still another widow, and himself made the prayer at the wedding, as if the time had come to take matters into his own hands.

This is not, it may seem, a very noble kind of literature; but it is, at its best, one of the most permanent. The masterpieces in such intimate or first-hand literature, with its triumphs of self-revelment, are few. Samuel Sewall was not a Montaigne, or even quite a Pepys, but enough has been quoted to indicate his real if inferior success in a vein similar to theirs.

In judging the early poetry of America, we must remember that the poetic product of England was of secondary value from the death of Milton, in 1674, till the publication of Burns's Scotch poems, in 1786, and of Coleridge's and Wordsworth's lyrical ballads, in 1798. We cannot wonder that in America, during the same period, among all the tasks of colonial and Revolutionary life, no poetry of abiding power was produced. The same year that saw Burns's first poems published

(1786) saw also those of the first true American poet, Philip Freneau, who, if he left a humbler name than Burns, as befitted a colonist, at least dictated a line of poetry to each of two leading English poets. It has been said that there was no book published in America before 1800 which has now a sure place in general literature. But Freneau before that date gave two lines to general literature which in a manner saved his time, although the lines bore to the general public the names of Scott and Campbell, who respectively borrowed them.

The first is found in Freneau's *Indian Burying-Ground*, the last image of that fine visionary stanza: —

“By midnight moons, o’er moistening dews,
 In vestments for the chase array’d,
 The hunter still the deer pursues,
 The hunter and the deer — a shade.”

Campbell has given this line a rich setting in *O’Connor’s Child*: —

“Now on the grass-green turf he sits,
 His tassell’d horn beside him laid;
 Now o’er the hills in chase he flits,
The hunter and the deer a shade.”

There is also a line of Sir Walter Scott which has its origin in Freneau. In the introduction to the third canto of *Marmion* in the apostrophe to the Duke of Brunswick, we read : —

“ Lamented chief ! — not thine the power
To save in that presumptuous hour,
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatch’d the spear but left the shield.”

In Freneau’s poem on the heroes of Eutaw, we have this stanza : —

“ They saw their injur’d country’s woe ;
The flaming town, the wasted field,
Then rush’d to meet the insulting foe ;
They took the spear — but left the shield.”

“ An anecdote which the late Henry Brevoort was accustomed to relate of his visit to Scott, affords assurance that the poet was really indebted to Freneau, and that he would not, on a proper occasion, have hesitated to acknowledge the obligation. Mr. Brevoort was asked by Scott respecting the authorship of certain verses on the battle of Eutaw, which he had seen in a magazine, and had by heart, and which he knew were American. He was told that they were by Freneau, when he (Scott) remarked, ‘ The poem is as fine a

thing as there is of the kind in the language.' ”¹

Circumstances did not allow Freneau to develop a disinterested poetic art. In those stirring days there was, as he complained, little public favor for anything but satire. He had inherited hatred for tyranny with his Huguenot blood ; and there was a vein of bitterness in him which was ready enough to be worked, no doubt, when the time came. Mr. Tyler calls him “ the poet of hatred rather than of love ; ” certainly his reputation at the moment was won as a merciless satirist.

Freneau was a classmate of James Madison at Princeton. Contemporary with him The Hartford Wits were three men of Connecticut and Yale,—Timothy Dwight, Joel Barlow, and Jonathan Trumbull. Like Freneau, these writers began by tentative experiments in prose and verse, and like him they were swept into the current of the Revolution and into the service of political satire. For a time these three writers, who came to be known as the “ Hartford Wits,” constituted a genuine literary centre in Connecticut.

¹ Mary S. Austin's *Life of Freneau*, quoted from Duyckinck, pp. 219, 220.

The period of their brief supremacy was a remarkable one. The year 1765 marks the end of the colonial period of American writing. Much was still to be uttered from the colonial point of view, but it could no longer go unchallenged. For the next twenty years little was written which did not concern itself in some way with the question of American rights or American independence. The influence exerted during the first half of this period by the satirical verses of Freneau and the Hartford group would be hard to exaggerate. We have to do only with the literary quality of this work ; and from such a point of view, at least, Freneau and Trumbull stand clearly above the rest.

John Trumbull was born in 1750. He passed his examination for Yale College at the age of seven, sitting in the lap of an older man to write. When his body was big enough, he entered college, retaining some sort of connection with the institution for most of the time until 1773. He was a close and intelligent student of English literature, and it is not surprising that his early prose and verse are imitative

in form. So is most of the prose and verse in any age. The fact remains to be insisted upon that if his essays and his verse are Addisonian and Butlerian, they have the unmistakable quality of literature. His *Ode to Sleep*, written at about the close of his New Haven residence, owns a greater master than Pope or Butler :—

“Descend, and graceful in thy hand,
With thee bring thy magic wand,
And thy pencil, taught to glow
In all the hues of Iris’ bow.
And call thy bright, ærial train,
Each fairy form and visionary shade,
That in th’ Elysian land of dreams,
The flower-inwoven banks along,
Or bowery maze that shades the purple streams,
Where gales of fragrance breathe th’ enamor’d
song,
In more than mortal charms array’d,
People the airy vales and revel in thy reign.”

This was written at twenty-three, an age which may be expected to produce imitative work. In the mean time, during 1772 and 1773, Trumbull gave unmistakable evidence of his power as a satirist, by producing *The Power of Dullness*, a long poem in three parts, published separately, and ridiculing

the current method of university education. The book is forgotten, but some of its epigrammatic couplets still linger, like : —

“For metaphysics, rightly shown,
But teach how little can be known.”

Or : —

“First from the dust our sex began,
But woman was refined from man.”

This is the measure of Butler's *Hudibras*, which Trumbull was to employ again in his masterpiece, *McFingal*. The first canto of *McFingal* was published in April, 1775, soon after Lexington and Concord. The hero is a Scottish-American Tory, and the scene is laid at a New England town meeting ; an admirable setting for the most famous of the Revolutionary satires. It has not become quite a classic ; for, with all his wit and taste, Trumbull lacked the fire of imagination, and the exquisite sense of fitness in expression which belong to creative genius.

Critics who wish to confine themselves to considering the expression of life in literature, must often be embarrassed by the fact, that, in very important his-
torical periods, life often finds an intense and

Printed
Oratory.

effective, though not in itself permanent, expression outside of literature. At the dawn of our national life, American intellect found its strongest utterance, not like Greece in poetry, but like Rome in oratory.

It has always been recognized that, as between the two nations from whom all modern European civilization depends, the literature of Greece began in poetry, and the intellectual life of Rome in oratory and statesmanship. Cicero points out that literature did not come to the Romans until after their habits were fully formed. "It is natural to associate the idea of poetry with youth, both in nations and individuals. Yet the evidence of their language, of their religion, and of their customs leads to the conclusion that the Romans, while prematurely great in action and government, were in the earlier stages of their national life little moved by any kind of poetical imagination." Cicero expressly points out in his *Tusculan Disputations* that poets came late to Rome but orators early. All this is singularly true of the United States of America as compared with European states. America had astonished Europe with oratory and statesmanship

before its literature was born. If it has been often asserted that there was no book published in America, before 1800, which retains a place in literature, it has also been more than once asserted that since 1800, with the exception of Daniel Webster and Wendell Phillips, America has not produced an orator. Both opinions are one-sided ; but what is true is that in America, as in Rome, oratory reached its climax first ; literature came later.

Europeans did not, of course, hear the early congressional speeches, which, however, often went across the ocean in the shape of pamphlets. In many cases, those early orators retain their English reputation to this day, but not in all. My friend, Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, grandson of the poet, who is now engaged at the British Museum on an annotated edition of Byron, once crossed the great reading-room to ask me if I had ever heard of any such American name as *P. Henry*, and showed me such a reference in a note to one of Byron's poems. He expressed pleasure when I told him that there certainly was a man named Patrick Henry, with whom I was not personally acquainted,

but who had apparently been rather prominent during the war of the Revolution.

It is to be remembered that the newspaper was then practically nothing, but the pamphlet was everything, and the English Civil War, it was often said, was fought in pamphlets. We know now what amazement was produced in Europe when the men who had been supposed to be ignorant backwoodsmen showered the world all at once with statements and arguments which really had dignity, nobility, and force. Such were those four documents sent out by the very first Continental Congress: (1) John Jay's *Declaration of Rights and Grievances*; (2) Richard Henry Lee's *Memorial to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*; (3) John Dickinson's *Address to the Inhabitants of Quebec*; (4) Lee and Dickinson's *Petition to the King's Most Excellent Majesty*. These are to be classified not as literature, but rather as printed oratory. An opinion of their high quality does not rest on American judgment alone, but on the verdict given by Lord Chatham in the House of Lords, on Jan. 20, 1775: —

“When your lordships look at the papers transmitted

us from America," said Lord Chatham, "when you consider their decency, firmness and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must declare and avow, that in all my reading and observation — and it has been my favorite study — I have read Thucydides, and have studied and admired the master-states of the world — for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, — under such a compilation of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia. I trust it is obvious to your lordships, that all attempts to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation, must be vain, must be fatal."

This fine intellectual exhibition, if it belonged rather to statesmanship than to literature, should have prepared the way for literature. The more cultivated English people were not unprepared for seeing it in the American colonies; for Horace Walpole, the most brilliant man of his time, had written to his friend Mason, two years before the Declaration of Independence, that there would "one day be a Thucydides in Boston and a Xenophon at New York." Unfortunately a different influence came in the way. In New England, whence much of this intellectual work had proceeded, the prevailing party among

educated men consisted soon after the war of an essentially conservative class, the Federalists, who had lost all faith in popular government, on the election of Jefferson. In the Massachusetts circle under that name of which George Cabot was the leader, the ablest writer was confessedly Fisher Ames, Ames. who wrote the first elaborate and really thoughtful essay on American literature (first published in 1809, after his death), in which he cuts off all hope of any such product, at least until some future age may have destroyed all free institutions, and the return of despotism may bring in literature and art among its ornaments. Like most men in that day, he believed literature the world over to be in a dying condition; and at the time when Wordsworth and Coleridge were just beginning to be read, he wrote as follows: —

“The time seems to be near, and, perhaps is already arrived, when poetry, at least poetry of transcendent merit, will be considered among the lost arts. It is a long time since England has produced a first-rate poet. If America has not to boast at all what our parent country boasts no longer, it will not be thought a proof of the deficiency of our genius.”

He looks gloomily upon the future, however, as regards America, and predicts only a social and political ruin, out of which literature may yet revive amid the ruins of freedom. He goes on to say : —

“ But the condition of the United States is changing. Luxury is sure to introduce want; and the great inequalities between the very rich and the very poor will be more conspicuous, and comprehend a more formidable host of the latter. The rabble of great cities is the standing army of ambition. Money will become its instrument, and vice its agent. Every step, and we have taken many, towards a more complete, unmixed democracy is an advance towards destruction: it is treading where the ground is treacherous and excavated for an explosion. Liberty has never yet lasted long in a democracy; nor has it ever ended in anything better than despotism. With the change of our government, our manners and sentiments will change. As soon as our emperor has destroyed his rivals and established order in his army, he will desire to see splendour in his court, and to occupy his subjects with the cultivation of the sciences.

“ If this catastrophe of our publick liberty should be miraculously delayed or prevented, still we shall change. With the augmentation of wealth, there will be an increase of the numbers who may choose a literary leisure. Literary curiosity will become one of the new appetites of the nation; and as luxury advances, no appetite will be denied. After some ages we shall have many poor and a few rich, many grossly igno-

rant, a considerable number learned, and a few eminently learned. Nature, never prodigal of her gifts, will produce some men of genius, who will be admired and imitated.”¹

This despairing kind of hopefulness was the utmost to which this highly cultivated man could attain.

So deep-rooted was this pessimism among them that in talking in my youth with the survivors of the old Federalists, I was never really able to trace a ray of light among them, or even a word of vivacity, in their days of defeat, except one reported to me as uttered, I am happy to say, by my grandfather, who was one of what were called the “Essex Junto” by Jefferson, and who probably wrote the once noted “Laco” letters, attacking John Hancock. Mr. James Richardson of Rhode Island, perhaps the last survivor of that circle, has testified that once, in George Cabot’s house in Brookline, there was a general moaning among these leaders of a lost cause, and it became a serious question how to treat the victorious Democrats. All were in favor of going down with their colors flying and treating all Democrats as criminals,

¹ *Works of Fisher Ames*, pp. 468, 472.

with sternness only ; until Stephen Higginson said, “Gentlemen, if you have to live in the house with a cat, you cannot always call her *cat*, sometimes you must call her *pussy*.”

Here came in the value of a sunnier clime and sunnier tempers in Philadelphia, which, whatever Horace Walpole may have thought, was destined to be, rather than Boston or New York, the pioneer in American literature, as in social refinement. It may be that Stephen Higginson, who had been for a year a member of the Continental Congress in its closing period, at Philadelphia, may have learned in the society of that city to “call *pussy*.”

CHAPTER III

THE PHILADELPHIA PERIOD

It is impossible to get the key to the early development of American literature without remembering that for fifty years the nation had no well-defined capital city, at least for literary purposes ; and it had only a series of capitals, even politically. In the very middle of the nineteenth century, James Russell Lowell was compelled to write as follows : " Our capital city, unlike London or Paris, is not a great central heart. . . . Boston, New York, Philadelphia, each has its literature, almost more distinct than those of the different dialects of Germany ; and the young Queen of the West has also one of her own, of which some articulate rumor has barely reached us dwellers by the sea." ¹

In this local development of literature, Philadelphia, the first seat of our government, naturally took the lead.

¹ " Our Contributors," *Graham's Magazine*, Feb., 1845.

The first monthly magazine, the first daily newspaper, the first religious magazine, the first religious weekly, the first penny paper, mathematical journal, juvenile magazine, and illustrated comic paper ever published in the United States had started on their career in Philadelphia; and that city produced, still more memorably, in Benjamin Franklin the first American writer to gain a permanent foreign reputation; and America's first imaginative writer and first professional writer of any description, in Charles Brockden Brown, the novelist.

In 1774 the first and second Continental Congresses met in that city, which was then the largest in America. In 1776 Philadelphia sent forth the Declaration of Independence. In 1787, in the same hall which had given birth to the Declaration, the Federal Convention assembled and formulated the Federal Constitution. The new Constitution met particularly strong opposition in Pennsylvania, which was, however, the second state to ratify it. The first Congress under the Federal Constitution met in New York in March, 1789, and Washington was inaugurated there

The First
National
Capital.

a month later. After that event, New York grew rapidly into a supremacy of numbers, of intellectual life, and of literary achievement. A year later, however, Congress returned to Philadelphia, there to remain until, in 1800, Washington became the permanent seat of government.

During and just after the Revolution, then, Philadelphia had the right to be regarded as the American metropolis. Public men gathered there from all parts of the country, and cultivated women came with them. French visitors, who soon became very numerous, criticised the city, found its rectangular streets tiresome and the habits of the people more rectangular still; but Americans thought it gay and delightful. Brissot de Warville declared that the pretensions of the ladies were "too affected to be pleasing" and the Comte de Rochambeau said that the wives of merchants went to the extreme of French fashions. The sarcastic Talleyrand said "their luxury is frightful" ("leur luxe est affreux"), leaving it an open question whether it was the amount of luxury to which he objected, or the kind of it. Mrs. John Adams, who had lived in Europe, com-

plained of a want of etiquette, but found Philadelphia society eminently friendly and agreeable. Superior taste and a livelier wit were habitually claimed for the Philadelphia ladies. It was said by a vivacious maiden who went from that city to make a visit in New York — Rebecca Franks, afterward Lady Johnston — that the Philadelphia belles had “more cleverness in the turn of an eye than those of New York in their whole composition.”

There was in Philadelphia a theatre which was much attended, and which must have had a rather exceptional company of actors for that period, inasmuch as Chief Justice Jay assured his wife that it was composed of “decent moral people.” In society, habits were not always quite moral, or conversation always quite decent. Gentlemen, according to John Adams, sat till eleven o’clock over their after-dinner wine, and drank healths in that elaborate way which still amazes the American visitor in England. Nay, young ladies, if we may accept Miss Rebecca Franks as authority, drank each other’s health out of punch tankards in the morning. Gambling prevailed among both sexes. An anonymous letter-

writer, quoted in Mr. Griswold's "Republican Court," declares that some resident families could not have supported the cost of their entertainments and their losses at loo, but that they had the adroitness to make the temporary residents pay their expenses. At balls people danced country dances, the partners being designated beforehand by the host, and usually remaining unchanged during the whole evening — though "this severity was sometimes mitigated," in the language of the Marquis de Chastellux, when supper was served, which was usually at midnight.

This picture of Philadelphia life sets before us the conditions under which a literature was produced which obtained immediate recognition, and in some instances permanent reputation, here and abroad. From Philadelphia had come, at the end of the colonial period, the remarkably effective work of the conservative John Dickinson, and, somewhat later, the trenchant arguments of the radical Thomas Paine, and the brilliant sallies of the Whig humorist, Francis Hopkinson. The *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* were written by Dickinson in 1767-1768,

The First
Literary
Centre.

and first printed in a Philadelphia newspaper. Later they were published in book form, with an introduction by Franklin, and had an astonishing popularity, not only in America, but in England, Ireland, and France. They were highly praised by such foreign critics as Voltaire and Burke, and their author was idolized at home until, as the Revolution approached, the public grew impatient of his temperate policy. He wished for constitutional liberty ; they demanded independence. Thereafter probably the most influential pieces of Revolutionary prose, outside of documents, were Paine's *Common Sense*, Hopkinson's *The Battle of the Kegs*, and Franklin's *Examination Relative to the Repeal of the Stamp Act*.¹

Such writing as this had greater flexibility, and therefore a more promising literary quality, than those pamphlets which Lord Chatham admired. The long series of volumes bearing the names of our early statesmen deal mainly with questions now past, and are rarely of interest to the modern reader.

¹ The title is, in full, *The Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin, in the British House of Commons, Relative to the Repeal of the American Stamp Act, in 1766*. First published in London, 1767.

Fortunately two authors, at least, among them possessed impulsiveness, vivacity, and humor as well as solid statesmanship ; and made, at times, a purely literary use of these qualities. Those two were John Adams and Benjamin Franklin. As the former had a wife of similar quality, their very letters form some readable literary memorial of that period, even though, after the practice of their time, her epistles were signed with such high-sounding names as " Portia."

In Franklin, on the other hand, we come upon a man who could not be said to turn
Benjamin to literature, but by his very nature
Franklin. made it a part of his various endowments ; and who might justly be called the first great writer in America ; the first to produce, in his *Autobiography*, a book now recognized by the world as classic. He was born in Boston on January 17, 1706, and died on April 17, 1790. He was apprenticed to his brother, a printer, but ran away to Philadelphia at the age of seventeen. He went to London and practiced his trade there for a time, returned to Philadelphia in a year and a half, printed and published newspapers and almanacs there, distinguished himself as

a founder of libraries, as an investigator of electricity, as postmaster-general, and as agent for the American colonies abroad. After the Revolution, he represented this country as ambassador to France, where he still stands nearest of all foreigners to the French heart. But he received from temperament, not from French influence, his most striking qualities, — the want of high spirituality, the this-worldly quality of his thought, and the cool sanity of his manner. His style has been called Addisonian, but it is primarily Franklinian. He lived at the period when Dr. Johnson's influence was at its greatest, yet he chose to keep to the simple idioms of common speech.

During his long life Franklin's genius expressed itself in many ways ; he became famous as a scientist, as a moralist, as (like most great moralists) a humorist, as a statesman, and as perhaps the greatest of autobiographers. Before the beginning of the Revolutionary period he had gained wide reputation in science and in practical affairs ; yet, says Professor Tyler, " undoubtedly his best work in letters was done after the year 1764, and thenceforward down to the very

year of his death ; for, to a degree not only unusual but almost without parallel in literary history, his mind grew more and more vivacious with his advancing years, his heart more genial, his inventiveness more sprightly, his humor more gay, his style brighter, keener, more deft, more delightful.”¹

One of the two works of pure literature for which he is now best known, however, *Poor Richard's Almanac*, belongs
Poor Richard. to the earlier period. The almanac was an established institution long before Franklin gave it standing as literature. The first matter of any length to be printed in America was an almanac published in Cambridge in 1639 ; and when, nearly a century later (1733), *Poor Richard* began to appear, it could differ only in degree of excellence from many of its predecessors and contemporaries. Among its most formidable competitors were the *Astronomical Diary and Almanac* of Nathaniel Ames, a Massachusetts man, father of Fisher Ames, and the *Rhode Island Almanac* of Franklin's brother James. These publications were re-

¹ Tyler, *Literary History of the American Revolution*, ii. 365.

Poor Richard, 1739

A N

Almanack

For the Year of Christ

1 7 3 9,

Being the Third after LEAP YEAR.

And makes since the Creation

	Years
By the Account of the Eastern Greeks	7247
By the Latin Church, when \odot ent. γ	6938
By the Computation of <i>M. M.</i>	5748
By the Roman Chronology	5688
By the Jewish <i>Rabbinical</i>	5500

Wherein is contained,

The Lunations, Eclipses, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & natural Aspects, Sun and Moon's Rising and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Rain, Clouds, and observable Days

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours West from London, but may without sensible Error, serve all the adjacent Places, even from Newfoundland to South-Carolina

By RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed and sold by B. FRANKLIN, at the New Printing Office near the Market.

spectively eight and five years older than the Philadelphia almanac ; and they have much of the varied humor and wisdom which, touched with the subtle charm of personality that belonged to everything Franklin wrote, made *Poor Richard* so famous.

The incidents of the last twenty-five years of Franklin's life cannot be more than touched upon here. His diplomatic career in England and France kept him away from America during almost the whole of the Revolutionary period ; yet his influence both at home and abroad was incalculably great. He did a great deal of writing, with entire indifference to literary fame ; for he had always a practical end to gain. During those years of absence he was continually flinging off pamphlets in the American cause, written with imperturbable good-humor and telling irony. From the very beginning of the Revolution he turned to the advantage of his country the pungency, directness, and humor of his style. On the 16th of May, 1775, he wrote to Priestley this condensed sketch of the battle of Lexington, in which each sentence is an epigram : —

“ You will have heard, before this reaches you, of a march stolen by the regulars into the country by night,

and of their expedition back again. They retreated twenty miles in six hours. The governor had called the assembly to propose Lord North's pacific plan, but, before the time of their meeting, he began cutting their throats. You know it was said he carried the sword in one hand and the olive branch in the other; and it seems he chose to give them a touch of the sword first. . . . All America is exasperated by his conduct, and more firmly united than ever."

His public career he might perhaps have explained as his friend Lord Dunning did his legal business, when he said, "I do one third of it, another third does itself, and the remaining third remains undone." Industry was, however, the habit of Franklin's nature so thoroughly that it entered into the blood of his race. The Rev. Dr. Furness used to speak with delight of an aged Philadelphia lady, Franklin's grand-niece, who was in the habit of saying her prayers while coming down stairs to breakfast, in order to save time.

On the fifth of July he writes to Strahan: "You have begun to burn our towns, and murder our people. Look upon your hands — they are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and I am, Yours, B. Franklin."

On the third of October, Franklin again writes to Priestley: "Tell our dear good friend, Dr. Price, who sometimes had his doubts and despondencies about our firmness, that America is determined and unanimous, — a very few Tories and placemen excepted, who will probably soon export themselves. Britain, at the expense of three million pounds, has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees this campaign — which is twenty thousand pounds a head; and at Bunker's Hill she gained a mile of ground, half of which she lost again by our taking post on Ploughed Hill. During the same time sixty thousand children have been born in America. From these data, his mathematical head will easily calculate the time and expense necessary to kill us all, and conquer our whole territory."

There we see the literary touch, but it is still more clearly to be felt in his autobiography; as, for example, in the The Auto- account of his first entry into biography. Philadelphia: —

"... I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no soul, nor where to look for lodging. I

was fatigued with traveling, rowing, and want of rest ; I was very hungry ; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of the boat for my passage, who at first refused it, on account of my rowing ; but I insisted on their taking it, a man being sometimes more generous when he has but little money than when he has plenty, perhaps through fear of being thought to have but little.

“ Then I walked up the street, gazing about, till near the market house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker’s he directed me to, in Second Street, and asked for a biscuit, intending such as we had in Boston ; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a threepenny loaf, and was told they had none such. So not considering or knowing the difference of money and the greater cheapness, nor the names of his bread, I bade him give me threepenny worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walked off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife’s father ; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market Street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of river water ; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other

two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther."

Every sentence ends with a snap. Probably Franklin eating his rolls in the street is the best-known figure in American history, after Washington and his little hatchet; and the fact is due not to any extraordinary character in the situation, but to the literary skill with which he brings it before us.

Note the felicity with which he defends in the autobiography that failure to acquire orderly habits with which John Adams reproached him: —

"I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who in buying an axe of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him, if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the axe hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on; and at length would take his axe as it was, without further grinding. 'No,' said the smith, 'turn on, turn on, we shall have it bright by and by; as yet it is only speckled.' 'Yes,' said the man, 'but *I think I like a speckled axe best.*' And I believe this

may have been the case with many, who, having for want of some such means as I employed, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that '*a speckled axe is best.*' For something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me, that such extreme nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous ; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated ; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance. In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to *Order* ; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it."

It is amusing to notice in this connection that "Order" stands third among the thirteen practical virtues which Franklin early tabulated and set himself to acquire ; a whimsical digest of the system of thrifty morality which he perceived to be at the basis of worldly success. Franklin lacked spiritual power — the imaginative grasp of truth which belongs to creative minds. He had, however, what is perhaps the best working substitute for such power, the ability to state homely truths in such effective form as to offer to unimaginative minds a practical rule of living.

His famous saying "Honesty is the best policy" suggests very fairly the range of his power as a moralist, and the secret of his success as a man.

Franklin was born in Boston, but his distinctive flavor belonged to a city where the literary touch was earlier recognized. A certain proof of the cultivated character of Philadelphia, beyond New York or Boston, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, may be found in the remarkable magazine called *The Portfolio*, a weekly quarto which may fairly be described as the first essentially literary periodical in America. Joseph Denny, the editor, was a Bostonian and a Harvard graduate, and had edited newspapers in New England. He had been nominated for Congress and defeated in New Hampshire, and went to Philadelphia in 1799, as private secretary to Thomas Pickering, Secretary of State. *The Portfolio* was established at the beginning of 1801; was for five years a quarto and then for many years an octavo, following precisely the development which periodicals now sustain, substituting octavo for quarto, monthly for weekly, introducing illustrations and some-

times going down hill. He had for assistant writers John Quincy Adams, whose *Letters from Silesia* first appeared there, after being published in London in 1800, and Charles Brockden Brown, the so-called "Father of American Fiction," of whom we shall presently speak. Reading these volumes now, one finds with surprise that they go beyond similar periodicals even at the present day, in the variety of sources whence their cultivation came. *The Portfolio* translates portions of Voltaire's *Henriade*; recognizes the fact that fresh intellectual activity has just begun in England; quotes early poems by Coleridge and Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt, sometimes without giving the names, showing the editors to have been attracted by the poems themselves apart from the author. There is no want of color in the criticism. German books are apt to be found rather abhorrent to the Philadelphia critic, which is not surprising when we remember that it was the age of Kotzebue, whose travels it burlesques and who drives the editor into this extraordinary outburst: "The rage for German literature is one of the foolish and uncouth whims of the time and

deserves all the acrimony of the lampooner. We are sick, heart-sick of the rambling bombast, infamous sentiments, and distempered sensibility of the Teutonic tribe." He, however, thinks but little better of William Godwin, and prints a burlesque of Dr. Johnson as bitter as if Johnson had written in German. He states an important truth in saying somewhere that punning is an humble species of wit, much relished in America; but in a later issue tones down this assertion by giving three columns from Dean Swift in favor of punning. He often gives letters from Europe, coming from various directions; discusses the theatre fully, both in Boston and Philadelphia; discloses to us the important fact that books in America still had to be published by subscription at that day and almost never off-hand; and he finally shows us the limitation of even Philadelphia cultivation by telling us that the Loganian library, pioneer of all American libraries, was then kept shut all the morning and became a mere coffee-house lounge in the afternoon.

It is one indication of the early leadership of Philadelphia that the first considerable collection of miscellaneous poetry published

in this country appeared there in 1809, under the title of *The American Poetical Miscellany, Original and Selected*. The editor says of it, in that florid style which still prevailed in prefaces: "The volume of poetry is made valuable by enfoldng in its embraces some of the richest and deepest tinted flowers which ever bound the brows of Melancholy, or sparkled under the heavenly gem which drops from Pity's eye. Its pages are also strewed with many a wild and fragrant flower, gathered by Genius and Fancy, as they together strolled amid the wild luxuriance of the fields of nature." This belonged to the personifying period, when men wrote "Inoculation, Heavenly Maid!"

It is worth noticing, however, that the editor's taste is much better than his style, and he shows unquestionably that the best English poetry of that day, as was true of the poetry of Tennyson and Browning at a later day, was earlier appreciated in America than at home. The volume opens with Burns's *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled* and closes with Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, in its original and more vigorous form;

and this at a time when Coleridge's new theory of versification, now generally accepted, that verse should be read by the accents, not by the syllables, was pronounced by the *London Monthly Review* to yield only "rude unfashioned stuff;" and Burns's poems were described by it as "disgusting" and "written mostly in an unknown tongue." The Lake poets were described by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* as "constituting the most formidable conspiracy that has lately been formed against sound judgment in matters poetical;" and yet they were eagerly received, apparently, in America. It must not be supposed, however, that all the contents of this Philadelphia volume represent the same scale of merit; it also includes a poem of a dozen long verses by one Joseph Smith entitled *Eulogium on Rum*.

After Philadelphia's prestige as a literary centre had begun to wane, she was still to produce the second American writer who commanded the attention of trans-Atlantic readers. Charles

Charles
Brockden
Brown.

Brockden Brown was born in Philadelphia, Jan. 17, 1771, and died there of consumption at the age of thirty-nine, Feb. 22, 1810. By

his own statement, made in a letter written just before his death, we learn that he never in his life had more than one continuous half-hour of perfect health. In spite of his short life and his ill-health, he accomplished much. At first he studied law, but abandoned it for literature. He was a frequent contributor to the magazines of the time, and was himself the editor of the *Monthly Magazine and American Review* (1799), and the *Literary Magazine and American Register* (1803-8). His first published work, *The Dialogue of Alcuin* (1797), dealt with questions of marriage and divorce, and he was also the author of several essays on political, historical, and geographical subjects. His novels followed each other with astonishing rapidity: *Sky Walk; or the Man Unknown to himself* (1798, not published), *Wieland; or the Transformation* (1798), *Ormond; or the Secret Witness* (1799), *Arthur Mervyn; or Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799-1800), *Edgar Huntly; or Memoirs of a Sleep Walker* (1801), *Jane Talbot* (1801), and *Clara Howard; or the Enthusiasm of Love* (1801).

When, thirty years later, in 1834, the

historian Jared Sparks undertook the publication of a *Library of American Biography*, he included in the very first volume — with a literary instinct most creditable to one so absorbed in the severer tasks of history — a memoir of Charles Brockden Brown by W. H. Prescott. It was an appropriate tribute to the first writer of imaginative prose in America, and also the first to exert a positive influence upon British literature, laying thus early a few modest strands towards an ocean-cable of thought. As a result of this influence, all manner of wheels began to move, in fiction ; concealed doors opened in lonely houses ; fatal epidemics laid cities desolate ; secret plots were organized ; unknown persons from foreign lands died in garrets leaving large sums of money ; the honor of innocent women was constantly endangered, though usually saved in time ; people were subject to somnambulism and general frenzy ; vast conspiracies were organized with petty aims and smaller results. Brown's books, published between 1798 and 1801, made their way across the ocean with a promptness that now seems inexplicable ; they represented American literature to England. Mrs. Shel-

ley in her novel of *The Last Man* finds her whole description of an epidemic, which nearly destroys the human race, on "the masterly delineations of the author of *Arthur Mervyn*."

Shelley himself recognized his obligations to Brown ; and it is to be remembered that Brown himself was evidently familiar with Godwin's philosophical writings and with *Caleb Williams*, and that he may have drawn from Mary Wollstonecraft his advanced views as to the rights and education of women, a subject on which his first book, *Alcuin*, provided the earliest American protest. Undoubtedly his tales furnished a point of transition from Mrs. Radcliffe, of whom he disapproved, to the modern novel of realism, although his immediate influence and, so to speak, his stage properties, can hardly be traced later than the remarkable tale, also by a Philadelphian, called *Stanley ; or the Man of the World*, the scene of which was laid in America, though it was first published in 1839 in London. This book was attributed, from its profuse literary material, to Edward Everett, but was soon understood to be the work of a young man of twenty-one, Horace Binney

Wallace. It is now forgotten, except one sentence: "A foreign nation is a kind of contemporaneous posterity." In this book the later influence of Bulwer and Disraeli is palpable, but Brown's concealed chambers and aimless conspiracies and sudden mysterious deaths also reappear in full force, not without some lingering power; and then vanish from American literature forever.

Brown's style, and especially the language put by him into the mouths of his characters, is perhaps too severely criticized by Professor Woodberry as being "something never heard off the stage of melodrama." What this able critic does not sufficiently recognize is that the general style of the period at which they were written was itself melodramatic, and that to substitute what we should call simplicity would then have made the picture wholly unfaithful. One has only to read over the private letters of any educated family of that period to see that people did not then express themselves as they do now; that they were far more ornate in expression, more involved in statement, more impassioned in speech. Even a comparatively terse writer like Prescott, in

The Style of
the Period.

composing Brown's biography only sixty years ago, shows traces of the earlier period. Instead of stating simply that his hero was a born Quaker, he says of him: "He was descended from a highly respectable family, whose parents were of that estimable sect who came over with William Penn, to seek an asylum where they might worship their Creator unmolested, in the meek and humble spirit of their own faith." Prescott justly criticises Brown for saying, "I was *fraught with the apprehension* that my life was endangered;" or "his brain seemed to swell beyond its *continent*;" or "I drew every bolt that *appended* to it;" or "on recovering from *deliquium*, you found it where it had been dropped;" or for resorting to the circumlocution of saying, "by a common apparatus that lay beside my head I could produce a light," when he really meant that he had a tinderbox. Nothing is more difficult than to tell, in the fictitious literature of even a generation or two ago, where a faithful delineation ends and where caricature begins. The four-story signatures of Micawber's letters, as represented by Dickens, go but little beyond the similar courtesies employed in a

gentlewoman's letters in the days of Anna Seward. All we can say is that within a century, for some cause or other, English speech has grown very much simpler, and human happiness has probably increased in proportion.

In the preface to his second novel, *Edgar Huntly*, Brown announces it as his primary purpose to be American in theme, "to exhibit a series of adventures growing out of our own country," adding "That the field of investigation opened to us by our own country should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe may be readily conceived." He protests against "puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras," and adds: "The incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the western wilderness are far more suitable." All this is admirable, but unfortunately the inherited thoughts and methods of the period hung round him to cloy his style, even after his aim was emancipated. It is to be remembered that all his imaginative work was done in early life, before the age of thirty and before his powers became mature. Yet with all his drawbacks he had achieved his end,

and had laid the foundation for American fiction.

Notwithstanding his inflation of style, he was undoubtedly, in his way, a careful observer. The proof of this is that he has preserved for us many minor points of life and manners which make the Philadelphia of a century ago now more familiar to us through him than is any other American city of that period. He gives us the roving Indian; the newly arrived French musician with violin and monkey; the suburban farmhouses, where boarders are entertained at a dollar a week; the gray cougar amid caves of limestone. We learn from him "the dangers and toils of a midnight journey in a stage coach in America. The roads are knee-deep in mire, winding through crags and pits, while the wheels groan and totter and the curtain and roof admit the wet at a thousand seams." We learn the proper costume for a youth of good family, — "nankeen coat striped with green, a white silk waistcoat elegantly needle-wrought, cassimere pantaloons, stockings of variegated silk, and shoes that in their softness vie with satin." When dressing himself, this favored youth ties his

flowing locks with a black ribbon. We find from him that "stage boats" then crossed twice a day from New York to Staten Island, and we discover also with some surprise that negroes were freely admitted to ride in stages in Pennsylvania, although they were liable, half a century later, to be ejected from street-cars. We learn also that there were negro free schools in Philadelphia. All this was before 1801.

It has been common to say that Brown had no literary skill, but it would be truer to say that he had no sense of literary construction. So far as skill is tested by the power to pique curiosity, Brown had it; his chapters almost always end at a point of especial interest, and the next chapter, postponing the solution, often starts the interest in a wholly new direction. But literary structure there is none: the plots are always cumulative and even oppressive; narrative is inclosed in narrative; new characters and new complications come and go, while important personages disappear altogether, and are perhaps fished up with difficulty, as with a hook and line, on the very last page. There is also a total lack of humor, and only such efforts

at vivacity as this : "Move on, my quill ! wait not for my guidance. Reanimated with thy master's spirit, all airy light. A heyday rapture ! A mounting impulse sways him ; lifts him from the earth." There is so much of monotony in the general method, that one novel seems to stand for all ; and the same modes of solution reappear so often — somnambulism, ventriloquism, yellow fever, forged letters, concealed money, secret closets — that it not only gives a sense of childishness, but makes it very difficult to recall, as to any particular passage, from which book it came, and leaves us quite willing to doubt whether it came from any. It is easy enough to criticise Brown, but he unquestionably had his day and served his purpose. He lived among a circle of Philadelphians who took habitually a tone like that of Cherbuliez' charming heroine, who declares that for her the world ends at fifty leagues from Paris and she leaves all beyond to the indiscreet curiosity of geographers. He did not live to see the centre of statesmanship transferred in one direction, that of business in another, that of literature for a time in a third.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW YORK PERIOD

DURING the course of the Revolution, as we have seen, Philadelphia's position of authority in literary matters became gradually less firm. The best verse of the period had come from Connecticut and New Jersey, and the best prose from New York and Virginia. The removal of the first Congress to New York in 1783 was a sign of waning political prestige; and when six years later New York was chosen as the scene of the final organization of the American Republic, in April, 1789, the transfer of authority, political, social, and literary, was made sure.

At this date what is commonly called the National Period of American literature begins; but it will be seen that from this time political belief or practice had very little to do with the substance or quality of the best literature which was produced. Social

conditions, on the other hand, had much to do with the character of this work ;
 Social Conditions. and it is quite necessary to understand the composition of New York society after the Revolution in order to understand its literary product. It was probably both less refined and less provincial than that of Philadelphia had been during its precedence. In its lighter aspects it may be best judged, like all other social matters, by the testimony of women.

The most brilliant belle of the period, Miss Vining of Philadelphia, — who was a correspondent of Lafayette and was so much admired by the French officers that Marie Antoinette invited her, through Mr. Jefferson, to the Tuileries, — complains in a letter to Governor Dickinson in 1783 that Philadelphia has lost all its gaiety with the removal of Congress from the city, but adds, “ You know, however, that here alone [*i. e.*, in Philadelphia] can be found a truly intellectual and refined society, such as one naturally expects in the capital of a great country.” Miss Franks, from whom we have already quoted, speaks in a similar tone : “ Few ladies here [in New York] know how to

entertain company in their own houses, unless they introduce the card-table. Except the Van Hornes, who are remarkable for their good sense and ease, I don't know a woman or girl who can chat above half an hour, and that on the form of a cap, the color of a ribbon or the set of a hoop, stay or *jupon*. . . . With what ease I have seen a Chew, a Penn, an Oswald, an Allen, and a thousand others, entertain a large circle of both sexes [in Philadelphia], the conversation, without the aid of cards, never flagging or seeming in the least strained or stupid!" We may reasonably suspect that this judgment is somewhat prejudiced.

For the testimony of a more staid witness, with an eye chiefly for the masculine aspect of society, we may turn to a description from a volume called *The Talisman* purporting to be written by one Francis Herbert, and containing very graphic reminiscences of New York by Gulian C. Verplanck and William C. Bryant the poet. This passage, probably by Mr. Verplanck, gives a glimpse at the semi-official society of the city in those days.

"Cedar street, since that day, has declined from its ancient consequence. I had the pleasure of seeing

Mr. Jefferson in an old two-story house in that street, unbending himself in the society of the learned and polite from the labors of the bureau. And there was Talleyrand, whom I used to meet at the houses of General Hamilton and of Noah Webster, with his club-foot and passionless immovable countenance, sarcastic and malicious even in his intercourse with children. He was disposed to amuse himself with gallantry too; but who does not know, or rather, who ever did know Talleyrand? — About the same time I met with Priestley — grave and placid in his manners, with a slight difficulty of utterance — dry, polite, learned and instructive in his conversation. At a period somewhat later, I saw here the deputy Billaud de Marennés, who had swayed the blood-thirsty mob of the Faubourg St. Antoine, turned the torrent of the multitude into the Hall of the Legislative Assembly, and reanimated France to a bolder and more vigorous resistance against her foreign enemies. I visited him in the garret of a poor tavern in the upper part of William Street, where he lived in obscurity. But why particularize further? We have had savans, litterateurs, and politicians by the score, all men of note, some good and some bad — and most of whom certainly thought that they attracted more attention than they did — Volney and Cobbett and Tom Moore, and the two Michaux, and the Abbé Correa, and Jeffrey, and others: the muster roll of whose names I might call over, if I had the memory of Baron Trenck, and my readers the taste of a catalogue-making librarian. Have we not jostled ex-kings and ex-empresses and ex-nobles in Broadway; trod on the toes of exotic naturalists, Waterloo marshals, and great foreign academicians, at the parties of young ladies; and seen

more heroes and generals all over town than would fill a new Iliad?"¹

It is worth while to lay so much stress upon the composite character of this new society because it helps to account for the sort of literature New York was to produce. These French exiles could not help imparting an additional lightness and vivacity and polish to the manners of their American hosts; and the most characteristic and genuine literary product of New York during the next half-century was to be urbane and elegant in character rather than profound or forcible — a "polite" literature in the narrower sense of the term.

The father of the "Knickerbocker School," as the most prominent group of New York authors came to be called, was Washington Irving. The one achievement of this "school" was a considerable body of light social satire in prose and verse, which is now of value to the student of past manners. It is an interesting fact that Irving's first work of merit was done in precisely this field, and that never thereafter, though he tried very hard, did he

The Knick-
erbocker
School:
Irving.

¹ Griswold's *Republican Court*, p. 448.

succeed in producing anything which could be called deeply imaginative. This, however, is equally true of the great English writers to whom (without being in any proper sense their imitator) he was most nearly akin. John Trumbull had produced, just before the Revolution, a series of Addisonian essays of real elegance and acuteness. In the *Salmagundi* papers, written mainly by Irving and his friend James K. Paulding in 1807, the method of the eighteenth-century essayists is employed with a much freer hand. It pretends to be nothing but a humorous commentary upon town follies, though in the opening number the authors whimsically profess their intention to be "to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age." Whatever we may now think of the limitations of this work — its exuberance not seldom degenerating into facetiousness, its inequality, its occasional lapses into banality, we must own that it did for the New York of that day precisely what Addison and Steele did for the London of a century before, and what nobody appears to be likely to do for the New York or London of a century later.

The *Salmagundi* papers amused the town for a time, and were suddenly discontinued. The *Knickerbocker History of New York*, published two years later, brought Irving his first real fame. He employed his theme, a burlesque history of the three Dutch governors of New York, as a stalking-horse for purposes of light satire. Everybody in New York enjoyed it except a few descendants of the old Dutch worthies with whose names he had made free; and it won high praise abroad, notably from Walter Scott. The book was a real success. Irving had proved himself master of a fluent humorous style which might have been employed indefinitely in the treatment of similar themes. But for many years he was, according to the New York standard, a man of fashion, with no need and no desire to write for a living. Middle age was at hand, when, ten years later, the pinch of necessity forced him to begin his career as a professional man of letters. *The Sketch Book* was published in 1819. Two years later Bryant's first volume of poems was printed and Cooper's novels had begun to

appear ; but at this time Irving had the field to himself. *The Sketch Book* was the best original piece of literature yet produced in America. It was followed during the next five years by *Bracebridge Hall* and *Tales of a Traveller*.

In May, 1815, Irving had embarked for Liverpool, with no very distinct plans, but without expectation of being long abroad. It was seventeen years before he saw America again. The qualified success of the *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) led him to feel that his vein was running out, and he began to turn toward the historical studies which were to occupy him mainly during the rest of his life.

Not long after his return to America, in May, 1832, the *Tales of the Alhambra* were published. In the somewhat florid concert of critical praises which greeted the book, a simple theme was dominant. Everybody felt that in these stories Irving had come back to his own. The material was very different from that of *The Sketch Book*, yet it yielded to similar treatment. The grace, romance, humor, of this "beautiful Spanish Sketch Book," as the historian

Prescott called it, appealed readily to an audience which had listened rather coldly to the less spontaneous *Tales of a Traveller*, and had given a formal approbation to the *Life of Christopher Columbus* without finding very much Irving in it. Thereafter, except for the *Crayon Miscellanies* (1835) and *Wolfert's Roost* (1855), Irving's work was to be almost entirely in biography and history. Of his historical work it Historical Work. is enough to say that he was not eminently fitted for it by nature. Of course he could not write dully; his historical narratives are just as readable as Goldsmith's, and rather more veracious. But he plainly lacked the scholar's training and methods which we now require in the historian; nor had he a large view of men and events in their perspective. He had, at least, a faculty of giving life and force to dim historic figures, which gained the praise of such men as Prescott and Bancroft and Motley. Washington, for example, had begun to loom vaguely and impersonally in the national memory, a mere great man, when Irving turned him from cold bronze to flesh and blood again.

Irving's services to America in diplomacy

were not small. In spite of his long absences abroad, his true patriotism never wavered. The mere existence of such a figure, calm, simple, incorruptible, honored wherever he was known, and known prominently throughout Europe, was a valuable stay to the young republic in that perilous first half of the nineteenth century. But all his career in statesmanship and, perhaps we may add, the very books on which his fame seemed to himself to be founded, have now become a wholly secondary fact as regards the basis of his fame. They obtained for him his degree at Oxford, but Mr. Warner has well pointed out that the students were more far-seeing when they shouted, by way of applause, on that occasion, the names of Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane. It is after all, in Edmund Quincy's phrase, not "specific gravity," but "specific levity" which often serves to keep a reputation afloat.

When Irving came back to New York he might be seen, as George Curtis describes him, about 1850, "on an autumnal afternoon, tripping with an elastic step along Broadway, with low-quartered shoes neatly tied, and a Talma cloak — a short garment

that hung from the shoulders like the cape of a coat. There was a chirping, cheery, old-school air in his appearance which was undeniably Dutch, and most harmonious with the associations of his writings." My only personal observation of Washington Irving was too much like his description of his only glimpse of "the Stout Gentleman," after watching for him through a whole wet Sunday in a country inn, to be of much real value. He came to Cambridge for a hurried visit at the house of his kinsman Henry Van Wart, a singularly handsome young Englishman who had married an American wife, a relative of my own. I remember that he called briefly at my mother's house and that I saw him getting in and out of the chaise. I remember the general testimony of the ladies of the house that he was a nice, kindly, elderly gentleman — perhaps about sixty — and did not seem a bit like a man of genius.

It is common to criticise Washington Irving as being a mere copyist of Goldsmith, which is as idle as if we were to ^{Irving's} call Lowell a copyist of Longfellow. ^{Originality.} They belonged to the same period, that of the eighteenth-century essay. Irving equaled

Goldsmith in simplicity and surpassed him in variety, for the very first number of *The Sketch Book* had half a dozen papers each of a different type. He struck out paths for himself ; thus Sir Walter Scott, for instance, in his paper on *Supernatural and Fictitious Composition*, praised Irving's sketch of *The Bold Dragoon* as the only instance of the fantastic then to be found in the English language. Irving did not create the legends of the Hudson, for as Mrs. Josiah Quincy tells us, writing when Irving was a little boy, the captains on the Hudson had even then a tradition for every hillside ; but he immortalized them. Longfellow, Hawthorne, and even Poe, in their short stories, often showed glimpses of his influence, and we see in the Dingley Dell scenes in *The Pickwick Papers* how much Dickens owed to them. The style is a little too deliberate and measured for these days, but perhaps it never wholly loses its charm. The fact that its character varies little whether his theme be derived from America, or England, or Spain, shows how genuine it is. To this day the American finds himself at home in the Alhambra, from his early reading of this one writer. The

hotels are there named after him, "Washington Irving" or more frequently "Washington," evidently meaning the same thing; and Spanish gratitude has furnished him with what all America could never give him, a wife. In the reading room of the chief hotel, opposite the Alhambra, there is a portrait of Irving hanging on one side and one of "Mrs. Irving" on the other.

No opinion of Irving's was more remarkable and perhaps less to be expected than that which he expressed toward the end of his life as the sum of his judgment in regard to the prospects of American letters. After spending the greater part of his mature life in Europe, he wrote to Motley as his conclusion: "You are properly sensible of the high calling of the American press, that rising tribunal before which the history of all nations is to be revised and rewritten and the judgment of past ages to be corrected or confirmed."¹ This was written on July 17, 1857, before the Civil War, and this was the opinion of a man the greater part of whose working life, like Motley's, had been passed in Europe; and who had thus a right

¹ Motley's *Correspondence*, i. 203.

to hazard a guess as to which tribunal was likely to be the tribunal of the future.

As marked in its triumph over European criticism, though as stormy as Irving's was peaceful, was the career of James Fenimore Cooper. He was not, of course, our earliest novelist, inasmuch as Charles Brockden Brown had preceded him and a series of minor works of fiction had intervened; novels commonly of small size but of wide circulation and written usually by women. First of these was *The Coquette, or the History of Eliza Wharton, a novel founded on fact by a lady of Massachusetts*, this being published in Boston in 1797. It was the work of Hannah Webster of Boston, who married the Rev. John Foster, D. D., and who also wrote *The Lessons of a Preceptress* in 1798, perhaps to excuse herself for the daring deed of writing fiction about a coquette. Many editions of her novel were published, the thirteenth appearing so lately as 1833, in Boston.

Another book of similar popularity was *Charlotte Temple, a Tale of Truth*, by Mrs. Rowson of the New Theatre, Philadelphia, 1794. It was a little book containing

one hundred and seventy-five pages of unmixed tragedy for the benefit of the young and thoughtless. If you took the headlines of a modern "yellow journal" and bound them up in a volume of one hundred and seventy-five pages you could scarcely equal their horrors. Yet Mr. Joseph T. Buckingham, the leading Boston editor of that period, describes it as a book "over which thousands have sighed and wept and sighed again, and which had the most extensive sale of any work of the kind that had been published in this country, twenty-five thousand copies having been sold in a few years." Mrs. Rawson's biographer, the Rev. Elias Nason, says of it that "editions almost innumerable have appeared of it, both in England and America." Up to the time of Scott, he says, no fiction had compared to it in England, and he claims that even in America, up to the time at which his memoir was written (in 1870), a greater number of persons could be found who had read it than who had read any one of the Waverley novels. It was with her and her alone, that Cooper at the outset had to compete.

James Fenimore Cooper was born in 1789,

the year of Washington's inauguration and the establishment of the new republic. Irving's first book appeared just twenty years afterward, and Cooper's eleven years later still. It took that much time, not unreasonably, for the long-expected child, literature, to be born. The immediate literary descendants of these two writers were, as is not uncommon, of less merit than their ancestors; though many of them had their period of popularity and died celebrities before the American public awoke to the fact of their essential triviality. Such transitions belong to the literary history of the world; in no department is it truer than in literature that, as our racy old American proverb says, "It takes but three generations from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves."

In temperament, Irving and Cooper were as different as possible, except in their common sensitiveness to criticism. Cooper was impatient, opinionated, suspicious of offense, and was in consequence never on very good terms with the world, or the world with him. He was the obnoxious kind of reformer who is disposed to build everything over on theoretical principles, but seldom gets beyond

the stage of tearing down. He belabored his fellow-Americans for having ceased to be English, and scolded the English for having remained as they were. As a result, he became equally unpopular in both countries. The *London Times* called him "affected, offensive, curious, and ill-conditioned," and *Fraser's Magazine*, with a preference for the forcible substantive, pronounced him "a liar, a bilious braggart, a full jackass, an insect, a grub, and a reptile." These tributes might have seemed to take the burden of reproof from American shoulders; yet it remained for an American, Park Benjamin, to do the best, or the worst, possible under the circumstances. In Greeley's *New Yorker* he called Cooper, with sweeping conclusiveness, "a superlative dolt, and a common mark of scorn and contempt of every well-informed American." Such criticism may safely be left to itself: Cooper was foolish enough to bring it into the courts and to spend much time and money in advertising his traducers. A far keener thrust, touching the very quick of Cooper's weakness, was Lowell's quiet remark: "Cooper has written six volumes to show he's as good as a lord."

With all his irascibility and his injudicious zeal about trifles, Cooper undoubtedly possessed disinterestedness and nobility of purpose. He never puffed his own work, or depreciated the work of others for personal reasons. At a time when Americans were disposed to confound hyperbole with patriotism, he spoke his mind with a truly patriotic candor. He knew honor and he wished to know justice. His faults were faults of temperament, and perhaps inevitable; for invention has never yet devised an inexplusive gunpowder.

Cooper's personal unpopularity did not prevent his novels from acquiring immediate success in America and England, and a permanent fame far beyond the limits of the English tongue. It is said that his tales have been translated into thirty-four languages. His first success was made at the height of Scott's fame, and his novels have held their own in popularity beside Scott's, ever since. Indeed, the lists of German booksellers show a greater number of editions and versions to the credit of the American romancer.

Cooper's childhood was spent at Coopers-town, N. Y., then on the frontier. After

some years in Yale College, and a dismissal for insubordination, he spent nearly five years at sea, became a midshipman, and intended to enter the navy for life. In 1811, however, he married, resigned from the navy, and became a man of leisure. His first strictly American novel appeared ten years later, and in the thirty years following he produced more than thirty novels, of which eight or ten are still widely read. Of these the *Leather-Stocking Tales* are of course the most famous.

Cooper's
Novels.

Like Scott, Cooper was less successful with his heroes and heroines than with his minor characters. The conversation of his civilian worthies is, as Professor Lounsbury has said, in his admirable biography of Cooper, "of a kind not known to human society." His women are particularly uninteresting, though in uniformly describing them as "females" he is simply conforming to the usage of his day. When he says of one heroine that "her very nature is made up of religion and female decorum," and of another that "on one occasion her little foot moved," in spite of the fact that "she had been carefully taught too that even this beautiful portion

of the female frame should be quiet and unobtrusive " — he is hardly extending the bounds of "decorum" which Scott laid down for his insipid heroines. On the other hand, it must be admitted that he never created a living, breathing woman of any sort ; while Scott, once rid of considerations of etiquette, could create such heroic figures as Jeanie Deans, Meg Merrilies, and Madge Wildfire. Many of Cooper's subordinate masculine characters, on the contrary, are entirely unconventional, strong, fresh, characteristic, human. Harvey Birch the spy, Leather-Stocking the woodsman, Long Tom Coffin the sailor, Chingachgook the Indian, are direct and vital creations of genius. In his interpretation of Indian character, moreover, Cooper discerned the presence of a poetic element which was ignored later even by such an historian as Parkman, but which has since been recognized as actual fact.

His long introductions and his loose-jointed plots he had in common with Scott ; but, like Scott, he found it easy to hold his readers when once he had gained their attention. He had, too, Scott's faculty of realism in the treatment of minor incidents and characters ;

and where they led the way, the best literary practice has followed. The *Edinburgh Review* was severe upon him for his accurate descriptions of costume and localities, declared that they were "an epilepsy of the fancy" and maintained that a vague general account would have been far better. "Why describe the dress and appearance of an Indian chief, down to his tobacco-stopper and button-holes?" It now turns out that this very habit has made Cooper's Indian a permanent and distinct figure in literature, while the so-called Indians of his predecessor, Charles Brockden Brown, were merely shadowy and unreal. "Poetry or romance," continued the *Edinburgh Review*, "does not descend into the particulars." Yet Balzac, a far higher authority, and one who handled the details of buttons and tobacco pipes as fearlessly as Cooper, said of *The Pathfinder*, "Never did the art of writing tread closer upon the art of the pencil. This is the school of study for literary landscape painters." He says elsewhere: "If Cooper had succeeded in the painting of character to the same extent that he did in the painting of the phenomena of nature, he would

have uttered the last word of our art." Upon such praise as this the reputation of James Fenimore Cooper may well rest.

The third of the three recognized founders of American literature during the New York period was a New Englander William Cullen Bryant. by birth, the poet Bryant. There was never a more curious illustration of the unexpected channels by which literature creates itself in a new country than was offered by the fact that the first recognized American poet should be by personal temperament and bearing one of the last men to whom the poetic function would at first be attributed. Quiet, prim, grave, reticent, slender, he seemed more like an old-fashioned lawyer or conveyancer, than one through whom a new world of song should come into being. In his actual pursuits, moreover, even as an editor, he was among the more formal and staid of his class, held all his assistants to the greatest accuracy and hung lists of correct spellings in his counting room, whereas most newspaper editors are chiefly anxious to accumulate words and trust Providence with the spelling. This was his daily life, and it resulted in founding what must to this

We are for the present in town, and intend
by and by, to come in and establish ourselves
here for the winter? so that if you and Mr.
Watton should happen to be here in the course
of the season, we should all be kind of seeing
you.

My wife and daughter desire their best love.
Our kind regards to Mr. Watton.

I am, Dear Madam,

very truly yours

W. L. Bryant.

day be called, all things considered, the best newspaper in the United States, the *New York Evening Post*. But it is maintained by those who knew him best, that from beginning to end he loved to be known as a poet, rather than in any sense a business man. That was the impression made on me when I saw him occasionally, in his later years, in Newport ; especially on one occasion where at some public reception I saw him and General Sherman meet. General Sherman, the antipode of General Grant, was the heartiest and most outspoken among noted men, and he stretched out his hand to Mr. Bryant with the most exuberant cordiality. "What," said he, "Mr. Bryant? Why, I have heard of him all my life. He is one of the regular old stagers. Why, he edited a paper as long ago as when I was a boy at West Point," and shook his hand violently. Mr. Bryant drew away his hand quietly with a rather wounded expression, I fancied, as if the pioneer American poet might perhaps have enjoyed some other recognition. Perhaps it was this life-long and rather prosaic atmosphere which left him less personally impressed upon the public as a poet than those who came just

after him. But I, who grew up on his poetry as a boy, just before Longfellow stepped into his tracks, can testify that the diet he afforded, though sparing, was uplifting, and, though it did not perhaps enrich the blood, elevated the ideal of a whole generation. He first set our American landscape to music, naming the birds and flowers by familiar names. He first described the beauty of the "Painted Cup," for instance, without calling it *Castilleia*, and he sang the snowy blossoms of the "Shad-Bush" which even Whittier called the *Aronia* :—

"When the *Aronia* by the river
Lighted up the swarming shad."

Professor Woodberry finely says of the Puritans, "Their very hymns had lost the sense of poetic form. They had in truth forgotten poetry; the perception of it as a noble and exquisite form of language had gone from them, nor did it come back until Bryant recaptured for the first time its grander lines at the same time that he gave landscape to the virgin horizons of the country."¹ He alone, of all the poets, reached far enough

¹ *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1902.

into the zenith to touch the annual wonder of migrating wild fowl — what the fine old Transcendentalist, Daniel Ricketson, well calls “the sublime chant of wild geese” — and to bring it into human song. His merely boyish poems sent by his kindred for publication, — the *Thanatopsis* in particular, written at seventeen, — have perhaps never been equaled in literature by any boy of that age; his blank verse was beyond that of any American poet. His fame has not quite held its own, and the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* does not mention him at all, but his collected poems, which appeared in 1821, — in the same year with Cooper's *Spy* and two years after the *Sketch Book*, — form the true beginning of our literary annals. In 1825 his verses brought him an invitation to New York which he accepted, and he became thenceforth a part of the New York influence.

It was said of Mr. Bryant by an accomplished English critic that “he partook, in an eminent degree, of that curious and almost rarefied refinement, in which, oddly enough, American literature seems to surpass even the literature of the old world.” He

disliked long poems, pronouncing them with much truth to be, almost without exception, "unspeakably tiresome." "The better the poem is," he said, "the less it is understood, as a general rule, by a promiscuous assembly." His translation of the *Odyssey*, on the whole one of the least valuable of his works, was the only breach of this principle of brevity that he himself formulated. This he began on a voyage to Europe, which he made with a copy of Homer in his pocket and a fixed purpose of rendering at least forty lines out of Greek into English every day. It is a curious fact that he had, like Longfellow, a special gift for foreign languages and liked to translate, and, also like Longfellow, had an occasional impulse toward humor, though the result was never very happy.

Bryant, though sometimes classed among Knickerbocker authors, did not really belong to that clique; not being a native of New York, as were Halleck and Drake, both of whom wrote poems which were declaimed with delight and many gestures by the school-boy of fifty years ago, but which perhaps are no longer heard even in school. The group also

The Knickerbocker Group.

included many of those minor writers on whom it cannot be our object to dwell. Among these was George Pope Morris — still remembered for two or three songs — the editor of the *New York Mirror*, then the leading literary journal of the nation. Besides being an editor, he held the ornamental position of general of the militia and was commonly given the benefit of his title. He was often mentioned by his admirers as “he of the sword and pen,” this being perhaps based on the ground that he did about as much execution with the one as with the other. Another was Nathaniel Parker Willis, once so famous that he boasted to Longfellow of making ten thousand dollars a year by his writings at a time when Longfellow wished he himself had made ten hundred. He was also the first to demonstrate the truth, long since so well established by others, that the highest circles of English society are only too easily penetrable by any American not hampered with too much modesty. Still another was Charles Fenno Hoffman, whom Dr. Griswold describes as the “Knickerbocker Moore,” and who wrote the song *Sparkling and Bright*. There was no doubt

a certain imitativeness about these men which may well be called provincial. The *Knickerbocker Magazine*, for instance, they liked to personify as "Maga" after the fashion of *Blackwood*; the only bit of such affectation, it may be said, which survived long enough to disfigure even the early *Atlantic*.

The whole New York school, apart from Irving and Cooper, has undergone a reaction in fame, a reaction perhaps excessive and best exhibited in the brilliant article called *Knickerbocker Literature* published many years ago in the *Nation*,¹ written by a young Harvard graduate named John Richard Dennett, long since dead. He sums up his diatribe — perhaps rather exaggerated — by saying that "all these men were our first crop and very properly were ploughed in, and though nothing of the same sort has come up since, and we may be permitted to hope that nothing of just the same sort will ever come up, yet certainly they did something toward fertilizing the soil." All this period is now removed by half a century; and while New York, unlike Philadelphia, has produced no new group of native writers as

¹ Dec. 5, 1867 (XIX. 362).

conspicuous as that of which we had been speaking, yet it has drawn from all directions not only journalists, but accomplished men of letters, who have made of it a national literary centre.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW ENGLAND PERIOD — PRELIMINARY

SOME time before the impulse toward a graceful if shallow "polite" literature exhausted itself in New York, a new kind of impulse had begun to make itself felt in New England. Up to the time of the Revolution an extraordinary ignorance of contemporary European literature and art had prevailed throughout the colonies. It is even said that America did not possess a copy of Shakespeare till a hundred years after his death. In the eighteenth century the colonists were by no means slow in getting the latest fashions and the latest delicacies from London; yet they displayed a surprising apathy toward the books which were then to be found on every London table. In 1723 the best college library in America contained nothing by Addison, Pope, Dryden, Swift, Gay, Congreve, or Defoe. Ten years later Franklin founded the first public

library in America by an importation of some forty-five pounds' worth of English books; among which the work of many of those authors was doubtless included. They were, in fact, the authors upon whom the taste of our best writers during the next century was to be formed. They were the fashionable English models for the cultivation of "polite letters."

But whatever the pursuit of such a practical ideal might be able to do for the literary manners of a still provincial people, it could not lead to the production of an original and robust literature. What Americans needed toward the middle of the nineteenth century was to be given contact, not merely with the courtly pens of England and France, but with the great minds of all the world and of all times. It was this impulse toward wider contact, or culture, which was first apparent, not unnaturally, in serious New England. The intellectual movement which followed, Professor Wendell suggestively calls "the New England Renaissance." "In a few years," he says, "New England developed a considerable political literature, of which the height was reached in formal oratory; it de-

veloped a new kind of scholarship, of which the height was reached in admirable works of history; in religion it developed Unitarianism; in philosophy, Transcendentalism; in general conduct, a tendency toward reform which deeply affected our national history; and meantime it developed the most mature school of pure letters which has yet appeared in this country.”¹

The period at which Boston began to assert itself as a literary centre which in some sense rivaled New York may be
 Period of Transition. set, perhaps, at the year (1830) when Webster and Channing were at the height of their reputation; when Webster's *Reply to Hayne* was delivered, and Channing was just entering upon that career of social and political reform which gave him both American and European fame. Boston was then a little city of some sixty thousand inhabitants, still a small peninsula hemmed in by creeks and mud banks, without water pipes or gas, but with plenty of foreign commerce and activity of brain. The area of the peninsula was then 783 acres; it is now 1829 acres. There was no Back Bay in the

¹ Wendell's *Literary History of America*, p. 245.

present sense, but it was all a literal back bay, without capital letters. Water flowed or stagnated where the Public Garden now blooms; the Common still had room for militia drilling and carpet-beating and ball games for boys and even girls. Down by the wharves there were many ships, mainly of small tonnage, yet square-rigged. There, moreover, were foreign sailors sometimes, and rich Oriental odors always; and that family was eccentric or unfortunate which had not sent one of its sons as mate or supercargo to Rio Janeiro or Canton. This was, externally speaking, the Boston of Channing and of Webster.

The fact has been already noted that in America, as in Greece and Rome, the first really national impulse toward ex-
pression took the form of oratory. The Orators.

Naturally, then, we find the new spirit of culture in New England uttering itself first through the mouths of men like Edward Everett and Daniel Webster. When, in 1817 or thereabouts, Mr. Everett, Mr. Cogswell, Mr. Ticknor (they were followed somewhat later by Mr. Bancroft), went to study in German universities, they went not simply to

represent the nation, as they did so well, but to bring back to the nation the standard of intellectual training of those universities. When Edward Everett came back here, it was to exert a very great and beneficent influence. To the American oratory of that day he contributed the charm of training, of precision, of wide cultivation. He had not in a high degree the power of original thought, or of inspired feeling. He had not even the charm of simplicity, though, like Webster, and unlike the other of the great trio of New England orators, Rufus Choate, he strove in later life to rid his style of the florid rhetorical quality which belonged to his early speeches.

The power of Everett and Choate is past, but Daniel Webster is still far more than the shadow of a name. His memory is yet armed with a certain awe even for the youngest generation. His very physical presence will not be forgotten, the strong, solid, majestic figure, the great luminous black eyes, the head of massive power. It is easy to see what an effect this magnificent physique must have had upon the orator's audiences; but the need remains for

some other explanation of the interest in his printed speeches which continues fifty years after his death. It is not altogether easy at first to discover the secret of their literary power. Many of his phrases became famous ; but it is astonishing to find upon examination how large a proportion of them are statements of simple truth, such as one would think hardly needed to be made. Here are a few of those which are recorded in Bartlett's *Dictionary of Quotations* : "Mind is the great lever of all things ;" "Knowledge is the great sun in the firmament ;" "Thank God I also am an American ;" "Independence now and independence forever ;" "Justice is the great interest of man on earth ;" and so on. These are universal truths, but unfortunately they are a little too obviously true when we come to take them by themselves ; they are too much what any of us might say. We do not really go on a great occasion to hear things said just as we might have said them, but to hear them said better than we might have said them.

On the other hand, a structure built upon a large scale cannot always be condemned for lack of saliency in detail. Webster's ora-

tory, like his physique, was impressive from its massiveness, not from its subtlety. More nearly than any other American he approached the fervor and the stately force of classical oratory. He was not a Demosthenes or a Cicero or even a Burke ; but he did find spoken discourse so natural a medium for the expression of his powerful personality as to give the best of his work some security of permanence.

The first American clergyman, after Jonathan Edwards, to achieve a positive literary hold upon the English-speaking world was William Ellery Channing. ning, who must not be confused with his son and two nephews, each bearing the William with a different middle name, and all men of marked intellectual activity. The hold taken at one time by Dr. Channing is seen in the fact that six different reprints of his little book on *Self-Culture* were published in England by different publishers in a single year. During his whole life, it is said, Channing never knew a day of unimpaired health, yet during that life, which ended in 1842, he was the recognized leader of New England thought ; known first as a

theologian in this country, but in Europe later as a writer on social questions. His books were published, either wholly or in part, in the German, French, Italian, Hungarian, Icelandic, and Russian tongues. For some reason, never fully explained, there has been some reaction in his popular fame. Probably the absence of any trace of humor in his work was one of the reasons why its hold has been more short-lived than that, for instance, of Emerson, from whom a delicate sense of humor was as inseparable as his shadow. Yet in the purely literary quality, in the power to sum up in words a profound or independent thought, a selection of maxims from Channing would be scarcely inferior to one from Emerson. The little volume, for instance, edited by his granddaughter from his unpublished manuscripts, is a book which bears comparison, in a minor degree, with the work of Rochefoucault or Joubert. Consider such phrases as this: —

“Great wisdom of God is seen in limiting parental influence. The hope of the world is that parents can *not* make their children all they wish.”

“We are not to conquer with intellect any more than with arms. Conquest is not kindly, not friendly.”

Again : —

“ Avarice is foresight wasted.”

“ He who, being insulted, loses self-possession, insults himself more.”

“ It is one of the wretchednesses of the great that they have no approved friend. Kings are the most solitary beings on earth.”

“ When I meet a being whom I cannot serve, I know my ignorance.”

“ I am no leveler. I have no favors to gather of the poor. . . . I have learned it not from demagogues, but from divine sages. A man who labors is fit for any society.”

“ Habit not merely confirms, but freezes what we have gained. It gives a dead stability.”

And this fine saying : —

“ Nothing which has entered into our experience is ever lost.”

These are not merely examples of thought, but of expression ; they prove their author to have been not only a speculative philosopher, but a man of letters.

One remarkable outcome of the transfer to New England of the literary centre was the development of a school of historians who for the first time took up the annals of the nation for serious treatment. It was Jared Sparks who first chose

the task of collecting and reprinting successively the correspondence of Washington and of Franklin. He was intimate at my mother's house and used to bring whole basketfuls of letters there; and I remember well studying over and comparing the separate signatures of Washington, as well as the variety of curves that he would extract from the letters *Geo.* of his baptismal name. Sparks was the honestest of men, and has been unfairly censured for revising and remodeling the letters of Washington as he did. His critics overlooked the fact that in the first place it was the habit of the time, and all editors in his day felt free to do it; and again that Washington did it freely himself, and often entered in his letter book something quite different from what he had originally written and sent out, which was in fact falsifying the whole correspondence.

Then followed George Bancroft, with a style in that day thought eloquent, but now felt to be overstrained and inflated; William H. Prescott, with attractive but colorless style and rather superficial interpretation; Ticknor, dull and accurate; Hildreth, extremely dry; Palfrey, more graceful, but one-sided;

John Lothrop Motley, laborious, but delightful; and Francis Parkman, more original in his work and probably more permanent in his fame than any of these.

But it must be remembered, as the drawback to historical writing, that very little History and Literature. work of that kind can, from the nature of things, be immortal. Just as the most solid building of marble or granite crumbles, while the invisible and wandering air around it remains unchanged for ages, so a narrative of great events is likely to last only until it is superseded by other narrative, while the creations of pure imagination, simply because they are built of air, can never be superseded. The intuitions of Emerson, the dream-children of Hawthorne and of Poe, remain untouched. Systems of philosophy may change and supersede one another, while that which is above all system has a life of its own. The most valuable part of historic work, as such, moreover, consists not in the style, but in the substance. It is the result of research. The books that sell and are quoted are those of the popularizer, those, for instance, of the late John Fiske, which no historical student would for a mo-

Friday A.M.
Returned last night
from Canada, and
find your note.

The term voyageur
was used by the
French from an early
time, say the end of the

17th century, as applied to
canoe-men in the employ
of traders. If they went on
their own acct. they were
generally distinguished as
avoués de bois, a term
sometimes also used as
synonymous with voyageur,
though the latter was
properly an engagé. F.P.

ment think of placing beside those of the late Mr. Justin Winsor on grounds of historical knowledge, yet which greatly surpass them in attractiveness of style. But the applause thus won is short-lived in comparison, as is seen in the rapid fading of the fame of the late James Parton, who was as popular in his day as Mr. Fiske, and entitled to quite as much recognition, yet added in substance but little to the sum of actual knowledge. As Bacon wisely pointed out, however, historical work is to be ranked rather with science than with literature, though it obtains, like scientific writing, additional influence when possessing also a charm of utterance.

In his *Life of Columbus* Washington Irving had produced a narrative which has in the main stood the test of subse- Francis
quent investigation, and which is Parkman.
also, by virtue of his style, literature. But Irving was a literary man first, and his fame does not rest upon his work in history. America has, indeed, produced only one professional historian whose work is equally admirable for its accuracy and thoroughness and for its literary charm. Francis Parkman was the product of generations of New Eng-

land character and cultivation. He was born in Boston, Sept. 16, 1823, and died there, Nov. 8, 1893. Before his graduation at Harvard (1844) his mind had turned toward the long conflict between the French and the English in America; and thereafter for half a century, with a rare union of enthusiasm and constancy, he continued to study and to write upon this theme. The first of the eight volumes of his great work was published in 1851, the last in 1892.

His health was early impaired, and for many years he was practically forbidden to read or write. Fortunately his inherited wealth made it possible for him to employ the services of others; and the very slowness with which he was forced to proceed may have been to the advantage of his work. His style is at once vigorous and stately, as may be seen from the following fragments, the first a description of scenery in the Black Hills: —

“Wild as they were, these mountains were thickly peopled. As I climbed farther, I found the broad, dusty paths made by the elk, as they filed across the mountain side. The grass on all the terraces was trampled down by deer; there were numerous tracks of wolves, and in some of the rougher and more precipitous parts of the

ascent, I found foot-prints different from any that I had ever seen, and which I took to be those of the Rocky Mountain sheep. I sat down upon a rock; there was a perfect stillness. No wind was stirring, and not even an insect could be heard. I remembered the danger of becoming lost in such a place, and fixed my eye upon one of the tallest pinnacles of the opposite mountain. It rose sheer upright from the woods below, and, by an extraordinary freak of nature, sustained aloft on its very summit a large loose rock. Such a landmark could never be mistaken, and feeling once more secure, I began again to move forward. A white wolf jumped up from among some bushes, and leaped clumsily away; but he stopped for a moment, and turned back his keen eye and grim bristling muzzle. I longed to take his scalp and carry it back with me, as a trophy of the Black Hills, but before I could fire, he was gone among the rocks. Soon after I heard a rustling sound, with a cracking of twigs at a little distance, and saw moving above the tall bushes the branching antlers of an elk. I was in the midst of a hunter's paradise."¹

The second passage is taken from Parkman's account of the capture of Quebec:—

“It was nine o'clock, and the adverse armies stood motionless, each gazing on the other. The clouds hung low, and, at intervals, warm light showers descended, besprinkling both alike. The coppice and cornfields in front of the British troops were filled with French sharpshooters, who kept up a distant, spattering fire.

¹ *The Oregon Trail*, chap. xvii.

Here and there a soldier fell in the ranks, and the gap was filled in silence.

“At a little before ten, the British could see that Montcalm was preparing to advance, and, in a few moments, all his troops appeared in rapid motion. They came on in three divisions, shouting after the manner of their nation, and firing heavily as soon as they came within range. In the British ranks, not a trigger was pulled, not a soldier stirred; and their ominous composure seemed to damp the spirits of the assailants. It was not till the French were within forty yards that the fatal word was given, and the British muskets blazed forth at once in one crashing explosion. Like a ship at full career, arrested with sudden ruin on a sunken rock, the ranks of Montcalm staggered, shivered, and broke before that wasting storm of lead. The smoke, rolling along the field, for a moment shut out the view: but when the white wreaths were scattered on the wind, a wretched spectacle was disclosed; men and officers tumbled in heaps, battalions resolved into a mob, order and obedience gone; and when the British muskets were leveled for a second volley, the masses of the militia were seen to cower and shrink with uncontrollable panic. For a few minutes, the French regulars stood their ground, returning a sharp and not ineffectual fire. But now, echoing cheer on cheer, redoubling volley on volley, trampling the dying and the dead and driving the fugitives in crowds, the British troops advanced and swept the field before them. The ardor of the men burst all restraint. They broke into a run, and with unsparing slaughter chased the flying multitudes to the gates of Quebec. Foremost of all, the light-footed Highlanders dashed along in furious pur-

suit, hewing down the Frenchmen with their broadswords, and slaying many in the very ditch of the fortifications. Never was victory more quick or more decisive.”¹

In pure literature the genius of New England was now very soon to find its highest expression. During the third quarter of the century the two noted Pure Literature. groups of literary men which had their respective centres in Cambridge and in Concord were to produce a literature which, even if not, so far as we can now see, of the very highest type, possessed genuine depth and power. Before actually engaging with this important subject, however, it may be as well to clear the decks by considering some of the minor figures which belong to that period.

There are plenty of them ; indeed, one who moved in the active literary society of the Boston of that day might well say, Minor Writers. as the Duke of Wellington did when the Honorable Mrs. Norton, the poet, wished to be presented to him, that he had been “very much exposed to authors.” Nothing is more striking in history than the rapid concentration of fame upon a few leaders

¹ *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, chap. iv.

and the way in which all who represent the second class in leadership fall into oblivion. Thus it is in public affairs. In the great liberal movement in England men remember only Cobden and Bright, and in the American anti-slavery movement, Garrison and Phillips, and forget all of that large class whom we may call the non-commissioned officers, whose self-devotion was quite as great. It is yet more strikingly true in literature. Walter Savage Landor states it as his aspiration to have a seat, however humble, upon the small bench that holds the really original authors of the world. It is a large demand on fate. The name of E. P. Whipple, for instance, or of Dr. J. G. Holland, or of R. H. Dana, scarcely appeals even to the memory of most young students, and yet these men were at the time potent on the lecture platform and in editorial chairs. We can already see the same shadow of oblivion overtaking the brilliant George William Curtis, and even a name so recent as that of Charles Dudley Warner.

Whipple was peculiarly interesting as taking an essential part in the literary life of Boston at a time when he was almost the solitary instance of the

self-made man in American literature. He also constituted a link between the literary and commercial Boston of his day. At a time when almost all New England authors came from Harvard College, he stepped into the arena with only the merchants' powerful guild behind him. He was said to have modeled his style upon that of Macaulay, then a popular idol, and was also said to have been complimented by Macaulay himself. His memory was great, his reading constant, his acquaintance large, his perceptions ready and clear. What he wrote was so pithy, so candid, so neat, that you felt for the moment as if it were the final word. It was only on the second reading that you became conscious of a certain limitation; the thought never went very deep, there was no wide outlook, no ideal atmosphere. While, therefore, his work had a considerable and wholesome influence upon his immediate audience, and was well worth doing, it cannot be considered as a strong original contribution to American letters.

The same disappearance of secondary figures applied to the women of that period. There was Lydia Maria Child, for instance,

whose *Appeal for that Class of Americans called Africans* was the first anti-slavery appeal in book form; and had very marked influence on her younger contemporaries. Mrs. Child's *Letters from New York* were so brilliant as to be ranked with similar work of Lowell's for quality, but have now almost passed into oblivion. The same is true of Miss Sedgwick; and Miss Alcott's name, though still living and potent with children, no longer counts for much with their elders. Of wider power was the work of three other women, whose names are, for different reasons, still remembered: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Helen Jackson, and Emily Dickinson.

Mrs. Stowe was born in New England. If she had spent her life there she might probably have been an abolitionist, but could hardly have written *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As it happened, she lived in Cincinnati from 1832 to 1850; and it was during this period that the materials were gathered for her famous book. Before her return to New England she had had plenty of opportunity for actual contact with slavery; she had frequently visited the slave

Harriet
Beecher
Stowe.

Hastford Conn
Feb 7 29 1892

Messrs Houghton Mifflin
& Co. Gen. Merch.

Tho so long delayed, please
accept my best thanks
for your kind courtesey, in
sending me the three new
beautifully illustrated editions
of Uncle Tom's Cabin, which
I received shortly before
Christmas, with your good
wishes for the Christmas and
all seasons.

Let me tell you how much
pleased I am with this new edition.
I think the illustrations excellent
particularly that of Aunt Chloe.

pleases me. It reminds me
strongly, in expression & attitude
of my faithful friend and
servant Eliza Buck of many
years ago, who I believe is
now in Heaven.

The illustration of Uncle Tom
& his children asleep in bed
I think is particularly good both
in expression and attitude
as are also many of the other
illustrations

With many thanks and
best wishes

Sincerely Yours
Harriet Bucken Stone

States, had sheltered fugitive slaves in her house, and had seen her husband and brothers aiding in their escape to Canada. She had lived there during the riots when James G. Birney's press was destroyed and free negroes were hunted through the streets; and Lane Seminary, where her husband taught, had repeatedly been threatened by mobs. Excitement in regard to the fugitive slave law was just then at its height. The book itself may therefore be regarded as in a sense a Western product, though it was written after Mrs. Stowe's return to the East.

It is a curious fact that Mrs. Helen Jackson's *Ramona*, which takes rank with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, had a somewhat similar origin, since it was largely her Helen
Jackson. life in Colorado which first influenced that brilliant Eastern woman to take the wrongs of the Indians for her theme. These two great novels, moreover, were written from the point of view of the moralist rather than of the literary artist. *Ramona* is in all points of literary finish far superior to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, of which Mrs. Stowe herself used to say that she left her verbs and nominative cases to be brought together by her pub-

lishers. I well remember in the latter case the enthusiasm with which the story was read at the North, first appearing in chapters in the *National Era*, then edited in part by Whittier; and that this feeling, beginning with those already convinced of the wrong of slavery, extended itself rapidly to others. The reception of *Ramona* was as decisively cordial, though on a scale less vast; it indeed reached foreign countries hardly at all.

So purely in the spirit of a tract was *Uncle Tom* conceived that it is hard for those who do not remember the absorbing interest which its theme at that time possessed, to understand the enthusiasm with which it was received, both here and abroad. It was the famous book of the century. There are now in the British Museum Library fifty-six different editions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in English, including abridgments, editions for children, etc., with fifty-four in other languages, including more than twenty different tongues, in some of which there are eight or ten separate versions. Mr. Barwick, one of the leading librarians at the Museum, told me that Thomas à Kempis was perhaps the only author, apart from the Bible writers,

who has been translated so much, although *Don Quixote* came very near it; but that neither of these had been rendered into so great a variety of dialects, because neither reached ignorant readers so well, or created such a demand for itself. For this reason especial pains have been taken by the Museum to collect all versions.

It must be remembered that the tale had the immense advantage, as had Cooper's novels before it, of introducing to the world a race of human beings whom it had practically ignored. The book had also, as the writings of Cooper had not, the advantage of a distinctly evangelical flavor. How much weight has been carried in other cases by this last quality may be seen in the immense circulation of such tales as Ingraham's *Prince of the House of David* in the last generation, and Wallace's *Ben Hur* in the present, both marked by this attribute. Indeed, Mrs. Browning herself subsequently writes of so mediocre a book as *Queechy*, which partakes of this quality, that "Mrs. Beecher Stowe scarcely exceeds it, after all the trumpets."

After all reservations have been made, after we have admitted that the method is too

plainly that of the preacher, and the verbal style sadly slipshod and commonplace, there is still this much to be said of the book ; that it is the work of a writer with a genuine though uncultivated talent for novel-writing, and is therefore likely to outlive many books which, while more skillful, are also more artificial.

Among other New England women of that period perhaps the most remarkable of all was Emily Dickinson. Though a fellow-townswoman and schoolmate of Helen Jackson's, she had little else in common with her. She was, in fact, a woman of a far less easily intelligible type : a strange, solitary, morbidly sensitive, and pitifully child-like poetic genius. She shrank with something like terror from contact with the outer world. Her own chosen home was among the clouds, and the nearest point of approach to it was upon her father's estate at Amherst. She could hardly be tempted away from the spacious grounds upon which she knew every bird and bee as a friend. To a friend's remonstrance upon her unwillingness to meet people, she replied : " Of ' shunning men and women,' — they talk of hallowed things

Safe in their Alabaster
Chambers -

Untouched by Morning -
And Untouched by Noon -
Keep the weak mem-
bers of the Resurrection
Rafter of Satei - and
Roof of Stone -

Grand go the Years
In the Crescent - above
them -

Worlds scoop their Arcs -
And Vismaments - row -

Whadems - Drop -
And Voves - Surrender -
Soundless as Vots,
On a Visc of Snow

E. V. Benson

aloud, and embarrass my dog. He and I don't object to them, if they'll exist their side." The reply is indicative of her weakness and of her strength. The woman who could afford, in all simplicity, to fall back upon her own companionship, and the companionship of animals, without caring to grow in wisdom, was of no ordinary character. Emily Dickinson never quite succeeded in grasping the notion of the importance of poetic form. The crudeness which an Emerson could mourn over, she could only acknowledge. With all its irregularity, however, her poetry preserves a lyrical power almost unequaled in her generation. In remoteness of allusion, in boldness of phrase, it stands at the opposite remove from the verse of Longfellow, for example; but if it can never attain popularity—the last fate which its author could have wished for it—it is likely, in the end, to obtain the attention of the "audience fit, tho' few," which a greater poet once desired of Fate.

A word should be said of the periodicals which had their origin in Boston, and which
The played, each in its different way,
Magazines. so important a part in the develop-
ment of New England literature. The *North*

American Review was founded as early as 1815, and for more than half a century gave opportunity for the scholarship of New England to express itself. Eventually it went to New York, where, published under the same name but governed by a widely different policy, it is still a publication of influence. The *Dial* (1840-1844), as the organ of the Transcendentalists, was, in a sense, still more limited in range. But, however circumscribed the boundaries of its practical influence, Transcendentalism was, so far as it knew, quite unbounded in the field of speculation; and the pages of the *Dial*, like the pages of the Pre-Raphaelite organ, the *Germ*, are of undying interest as they indicate certain important forces which were at work in their respective periods.

Scholarship and philosophy, however, can make contributions to pure literature only by inadvertence. The establishment *The Atlantic Monthly*. of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857 marks the attainment of a distinct standard of pure literature among the descendants of the Puritans. The *Knickerbocker Magazine* was breathing its last in New York, and *Harper's Magazine* (1850) was as yet pro-

ducing little literature of power. The *Atlantic Monthly*, on the other hand, was able to depend at once upon an established constituency of writers. Lowell was its first editor, and his stipulation in accepting the position — that Holmes should be the first contributor engaged — suggests a range of choice upon which no American editor had hitherto been able to rely. In fiction and in verse it must be admitted that the early volumes of the *Atlantic* do not compare favorably with modern magazine work; but the essays and editorials were usually excellent. It is not too much to say that for more than forty years the literary standard of this magazine has been maintained upon a higher plane than that of any other American publication. This fact speaks much for the quality of the group of writers by whom its earlier success was won.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAMBRIDGE GROUP

WE have now to consider the development of the only purely literary group of a high class which America has as yet produced. The best summary of their work is perhaps that made by the late Horace Scudder : —

“It is too early to make a full survey of the immense importance to American letters of the work done by half a dozen great men in the middle of this century. The body of prose and verse created by them is constituting the solid foundation upon which other structures are to rise ; the humanity which it holds is entering into the life of the country, and no material invention, or scientific discovery, or institutional prosperity, or accumulation of wealth will so powerfully affect the spiritual well-being of the nation for generations to come.”

The highest intellectual centre of this group was to be found of course in Concord, which we shall presently have to consider ; but its social centre was in Boston, or more properly

in Cambridge; and the house of Longfellow, always hospitable, was its headquarters.

The literary associations of Cambridge all cluster around a single ancient road, called in the earliest records "The Path from Charlestown to Watertown." The Path from Charlestown. Hunters, trappers, Indians, pioneers, farmers, had all traveled on that road, going westward; and the hastily gathered and "embattled" farmers marched down it, going eastward, from Cambridge Common to the fight at Bunker Hill. It led through what is now Kirkland Street, passing the house where Holmes was born, through Brattle Street, past Longfellow's house, through Elmwood Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street, past the house where Lowell was born and died. It then passed on beyond Mt. Auburn to the original village of Watertown, now marked by a deserted burial-ground only — on whose crumbling stones the curious schoolboy still notices such quaint inscriptions as that of Mr. John Bailey, minister of the gospel, "a pious and painfull preacher," or of his wife described as one who "was good betimes and best at last," "went off singing and left us weeping," and who "walked with God until

translated.” It is a matter of interest to recall the fact that the three poets who have been mentioned were born, lived, or died there, and made it from the point of view of literature the most memorable highway in America.

The American traveler in England who takes pains to inquire in bookstores as to the comparative standing of his country’s poets among English readers, Longfellow and Whittier. is likely to hear Longfellow ranked at the head, with Whittier as a close second. In the same way, if he happens to attend English conventions and popular meetings, he will be pretty sure to hear these two authors quoted oftener than any other poets, British or American. This parallelism in their fame makes it the more interesting to remember that Whittier was born within five miles of the old Longfellow homestead, where the grandfather of his brother poet was born. Always friends, though never intimate, they represented through life two quite different modes of rearing and education. Longfellow was the most widely traveled author of the Boston circle, Whittier the least so; Longfellow spoke a variety of languages, Whittier

only his own ; Longfellow had whatever the American college of his time could give him, Whittier had none of it ; Longfellow had the habits of a man of the world, Whittier those of a recluse ; Longfellow touched reform but lightly, Whittier was essentially imbued with it ; Longfellow had children and grandchildren, while Whittier led a single life. Yet in certain gifts, apart from poetic quality, they were alike ; both being modest, serene, unselfish, brave, industrious, and generous. They either shared, or made up between them, many of the most estimable qualities that mark poet or man.

The death of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow made the first breach in that well-known group of poets which adorned Boston and its vicinity so long. The first to go was also the most widely famous. Emerson reached greater depths of thought ; Whittier touched the problems of the nation's life more deeply ; Holmes came personally more before the public ; Lowell was more brilliant and varied ; but, taking the English-speaking world at large, it was Longfellow whose fame overshadowed all the others ; he was also better known and more

Henry
Wadsworth
Longfellow.

translated upon the continent of Europe than all the rest put together, and, indeed, than any other contemporary poet of the English-speaking race, at least if bibliographies afford any test. Add to this that his place of residence was so accessible and so historic, his personal demeanor so kindly, his life so open and transparent, that everything really conspired to give him the highest accessible degree of contemporary fame. There was no literary laurel that was not his, and he resolutely declined all other laurels; he had wealth and ease, children and grandchildren, health and a stainless conscience; he had also, in a peculiar degree, the blessings that belong to Shakespeare's estimate of old age, — "honor, love, obedience, troops of friends." Except for two great domestic bereavements, his life would have been one of absolutely unbroken sunshine; in his whole career he never encountered any serious rebuff, while such were his personal modesty and kindness that no one could long regard him with envy or antagonism. Among all the sons of song there has rarely been such an instance of unbroken and unstained success.

Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine,

Feb. 27, 1807. Through the Wadsworths and the Bartletts, the poet could trace his descent to at least four of the Mayflower pilgrims, including Elder Brewster and Captain John Alden. His boyhood showed nothing of the unruliness which people commonly associate with the idea of genius; indeed, the quiet sanity of his whole career was a refutation of that idle theory. He was a painstaking student, and made a very creditable record at Bowdoin College, where he had Nathaniel Hawthorne for a classmate. Before his graduation, in 1825, he had quite made up his mind as to what he wanted to do in life: it must be literature or nothing; and this not merely from a preference for the pursuit, but from an ambition, willingly acknowledged, to make a name as a writer.

He had no dream, however, of taking the world by storm. There seemed at first, indeed, to be little prospect of his making any direct step toward fitting himself for literature. There had been some question of his undertaking post-graduate work at Cambridge, but it had ended for the moment in his beginning the study of law in his father's office. Soon after his graduation,

however, there was a movement to establish a professorship of modern languages at Bowdoin, and he, being then scarcely nineteen, was sent to Europe to prepare himself for this chair. It is now plain enough that the young poet was really preparing himself, during the three years of travel and foreign residence which followed, for his literary as well as for his professional work. Even at the time, he was turning his experiences to a direct literary end. In 1835, some years after his return to America, appeared *Outre-Mer*, a book of sketches which did for the Continent what Irving, somewhat too obviously his model, had done for England. In the mean time he had been appointed to the chair of Modern Languages at Harvard University. During the second journey to Europe which followed, his young wife died; and not long after Longfellow returned to take up the duties of his professorship in Cambridge, where the rest of his life was to be lived, and the best of his work was to be done.

Outre-Mer had attained moderate success, but *Hyperion*, Longfellow's second and final prose work of importance, was destined to

Ah me! how dark the discipline of pain,

Where not, the suffering followed by a sense

Of infinite rest and infinite release!

This is our consolation; and again

A great soul cries to us in our suspense,

"I came from ~~earth~~ earth into this peace!"

Henry W. Longfellow.

attract far more attention. This was due largely to the new atmosphere of German life and literature which it opened to Americans. The kingdom in which Germany ruled was not then, as now, a kingdom of material force and business enterprise, but, as Germans themselves claimed, a kingdom of the air; and into that realm *Hyperion* gave American readers the first glimpse. There is no doubt that under the sway of the simpler style now prevailing, much of the rhetoric of *Hyperion* seems turgid, some of its learning obtrusive, and a good deal of its emotion forced; it was, nevertheless, an epoch-making book.

The curious fact, however, remains, that at the very time when the author was at work upon *Hyperion*, his mind was undergoing a reaction toward the simpler treatment of more strictly American subjects. It must be remembered that Longfellow came forward at a time when cultivated Americans were wasting a great deal of sympathy on themselves. It was the general impression that the soil was barren, that the past offered no material, and that American authors must be European or die. Yet Longfellow's few

notable predecessors had already made themselves heard by disregarding this tradition and taking what they found on the spot. Charles Brockden Brown, though his style smacked of the period, found his themes among the American Indians and in the scenes of the yellow fever in Philadelphia. It was not Irving who invested the Hudson with romance, but the Hudson that inspired Irving.

Longfellow's first book of original verse, *Voices of the Night*, containing such well-known poems as the *Hymn to the Night*, *The Beleaguered City*, and *The Skeleton in Armor*, gave him immediate popularity as a poet. It was in later work, however, especially in *Hiawatha*, *Evangeline*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, that he best fulfilled his dream of giving poetic form to material belonging peculiarly to America. But in criticising Longfellow's earlier poetry, we must not lose sight of that fine remark of Sara Coleridge, daughter of the poet, who said to Aubrey de Vere, "However inferior the bulk of a young man's poetry may be to that of the poet when mature, it generally possesses some passages with a

special freshness of their own and an inexplicable charm to be found in them alone." A common ground for criticism on Longfellow's poetry lay in the simplicity which made it then, and has made it ever since, so near to the popular heart. It is possible that this simplicity was the precise contribution needed in that early and formative period of American letters. Literature in a new country naturally tends to the florid, as had been shown by the novels of Charles Brockden Brown, or even by so severe a work as Bancroft's *History of the United States*. In poetry, Poe was to give only too wide a prestige to the same tendency. In subsequent years Longfellow published many volumes of verse, in which his experiments with English hexameter are now, perhaps, most famous. There is no doubt that the reading public at large has confirmed the opinion of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Of the longer poems of our chief singer, I should not hesitate to select *Evangeline* as the masterpiece, and I think the general verdict of opinion would confirm my choice. . . . From the first line of the poem, from its first words, we read as we would float down a broad and placid river,

murmuring softly against its banks, heaven over it, and the glory of the unspoiled wilderness all around."

After a tenure of eighteen years, Longfellow resigned his Harvard professorship. During the next few years *Hiawatha* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* were produced, and were received with great enthusiasm in America and elsewhere. The principal works of his later years were the Dante translations and *Christus: A Mystery*. The *Christus* was the fine flowering of Longfellow's spiritual life. Yet one rarely sees the book quoted; it has not been widely read, and in all the vast list of Longfellow translations into foreign languages, there appears no version of any part of it except the comparatively modern *Golden Legend*. It has simply afforded one of the most remarkable instances in literary history of the utter ignoring of the supposed high-water mark of a favorite author, and also perhaps of the fact that an author's early impulses are a safer guide than his maturer judgment. But, apart from any single work, Longfellow's fame was secure, and his death in March, 1882, was recognized as more than a national calamity.

In looking back over his whole career, we must see that while his work would have been valuable in any time or place, its worth to a new and unformed literature was priceless. The first need of such a literature was no doubt a great original thinker like Emerson. But for him we should perhaps have been still provincial in thought and imitative in theme and illustration ; our poets would have gone on writing about the skylark and the nightingale, which they might never have seen anywhere, rather than about the bobolink and the humble - bee, which they knew. It was Emerson and the so-called Transcendentalists who really set our literature free ; yet Longfellow rendered a service only secondary, in enriching and refining it, and in giving it a cosmopolitan culture ; leading to an unquestioned standing in the literary courts of the civilized world. It was a great advantage, too, that in his more moderate and level standard of execution there was afforded no room for reaction. The same attributes that keep Longfellow from being one of the greatest poets are likely to make him one of the most permanent.

Whittier, like Garrison, — who first appre-

ciated his poems, — was brought up apart from what Dr. Holmes loved to call the Brahmin class in America ; those, namely, who were bred to cultivation by cultivated parents. Emerson, Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, were essentially of this class ; all their immediate ancestors were, in French phrase, *gens de robe* ; three of these poets being children of clergymen, and one of a lawyer who was also a member of Congress. All of them had in a degree — to borrow another phrase from Holmes — tumbled about in libraries. Whittier had, on the other hand, the early training of a spiritual aristocracy, the Society of Friends. He was bred in a class which its very oppressors had helped to ennoble ; in the only meetings where silence ranked as equal with speech, and women with men ; where no precedence was accorded to anything except years and saintliness ; where no fear was felt but of sin. This gave him at once the companionship of the humble and a habit of deference to those whom he felt above him ; he had measured men from a level and touched human nature directly in its own vigor and yet in its highest phase.

Not one of this eminent circle had the keys of common life so absolutely in his hands as Whittier. Had anything been wanting in this respect, his interest in politics would have filled the gap. First thrilled by the wrongs of the slave, and serving in that cause a long apprenticeship, it was instinctive in him to be the advocate of peace, of woman suffrage, of organized labor. In such outworks of reform he had an attitude, a training, and a sympathy which his literary friends had not. He was, in the English phrase, "a poet of the people," and proved by experience that even America supplied such a function. The more exclusive type of life he had studied in New England history, — none better, — but what real awe did it impose on him who had learned at his mother's knee to seek the wilderness with William Penn or to ride through howling mobs with Barclay of Ury? The Quaker tradition, after all, had a Brahminism of its own which Beacon Street in Boston could not rear or Harvard College teach.

John Greenleaf Whittier was born in Haverhill, Mass., on Dec. 17, 1807. His earliest American ancestor, Thomas Whittier, was of

Huguenot stock, and not, like his descendants, a Quaker, though a defender of Quakers. Upon the farm and in the homestead inherited from this ancestor, Whittier passed his boyhood. He was as tall as most of his family, but not so strong. He took his full share of the farm duties; he had to face the winter weather in what we should call scanty clothing: it was before the period had arrived when, in Miss Sedgwick's phrase, the New England Goddess of Health held out flannel underclothing to everybody. To a stronger constitution the life should have been simply invigorating, but Whittier, though he lived to be eighty-five, was all his life a recognized invalid.

There were few books in this Quaker household, but the boy's instinct toward versifying asserted itself very early. His father did not encourage his attempts, but at the age of eighteen a piece of his verse sent by his sister to a Haverhill newspaper attracted the attention of its editor, William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison was himself only twenty-one, but his lively interest in Whittier's work was of great value to the young poet, and laid the foundation of a lifelong friendship.

Garrison urged the elder Whittier to give his son better schooling, but poverty stood in the way. A chance came a little later to take a few terms in a newly established "academy" at Haverhill; and that was all the formal education Whittier ever had. "I have renounced college," he wrote in 1828, "for the good reason that I have no disposition to humble myself to meanness for an education — crowding myself through college at the expense of others, and leaving it with a debt or an obligation to weigh down my spirit like an incubus, and paralyze every exertion. The professions are already crowded full to overflowing; and I, forsooth, because I have a miserable knack of rhyming, must swell the already enormous number, struggle awhile with debt and difficulties, and then, weary of life, go down to my original insignificance, where the tinsel of classical honors will but aggravate my misfortune." He was not, however, to return to farm life. Through Garrison he was offered the editorship of a weekly temperance paper called the *Philanthropist*, in Boston. In the letter from which we have just quoted, he said of this possibility: "Seriously — the

situation of editor of the *Philanthropist* is not only respectable, but it is peculiarly pleasant to one who takes so deep an interest, as I really do, in the great cause it is laboring to promote. . . . I would rather have the memory of a Howard, a Wilberforce, and a Clarkson than the undying fame of a Byron." The final sentence is especially noteworthy, as giving the keynote of Whittier's subsequent career. His life from this time was that of a journalist and a reformer, rather than that of a man of letters.

It would be easy, however, to lay too much stress upon his lack of academic training. His formal schooling, says Mr. Pickard,¹ "was only the beginning of his student life; by wide and well-chosen reading he was constantly adding to his stores of information; while reveling in the fields of English literature, he became familiar through translations with ancient and current literature of other nations." As a poet Whittier was not only slow in reaching maturity, but, in spite of his fondness for rhyming, very slow in producing anything of real promise. He himself was so fully aware of this that in the

¹ *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*, i. p. 72.

Dear

4/13 1888

Dear Garrison

Will you
have a copy of
my last portrait
sent to

Oak Ridge Seminary

Oak Ridge N. C.

I find my pictured
head is as much in
demand in the South
now, as my real
head was in the days
of slavery. True
me I G. W.

final collected edition of his works he preserved only two or three of the hundred or more experiments in verse which he made before the age of twenty-five. From journalism he seemed likely to slip into politics till, once again under the leadership of Garrison, he became identified with the anti-slavery movement, a connection which effectually debarred him from political success.

Personally, my first interview with Whittier was in my student days, soon after my graduation from college, when I was dining in Boston at an economical restaurant known as Campbell's, then a haunt for two classes of patrons, Harvard students and abolitionists. When I was nearly through my modest repast, a man near me exclaimed impetuously, "There is Whittier!" I had lately become an ardent reader of his poems, and looking eagerly in the direction indicated, I saw a man just rising from table, — looking thirty-five years old or thereabouts, — slender, erect, in the straight-cut Quaker coat, a man with rich olive complexion, black hair and eyebrows, brilliant eyes, and a certain Oriental look. I felt that then or never was the time to make his acquaintance, and rising from

my seat I shyly made my way across the room to him, and said, when I had reached him, "I should like to shake hands with the author of *Massachusetts to Virginia*." As I made the remark, he turned with a startled look upon me. "Thy name, friend," he briefly said. I gave it, and then and there began a lasting friendship.

If Whittier's bent was toward the active service of his fellow men rather than toward the literary life, it is none the less true that he is now known best not as a philanthropist but as a poet. His distinction is to have been more than any other American the poet of familiar life. What Lowell said dramatically, he could say from experience: "We draw our lineage from the oppressed." Compared with him Longfellow, Holmes, even Lowell, were poets of a class. Burns was his favorite poet, and, in later years, he attained, in the naturalness and flow of his song, to something like the lyric power of his master. A few of Longfellow's poems possess this quality, but it pervades the mature work of Whittier. Consequently, though not a little of his poetry lacks compactness and finish, very little of it lacks power. "His rudest

shafts of song," as Mr. Stedman has said, "were shot true and far and tipped with flame." It is only in this respect that Whittier resembles Burns. His character was as firm, and his life as well ordered, as Longfellow's. It has, indeed, been the fashion among those who remember the famous phrase, "Great wits are sure to madness near allied," to condemn all these poets as too respectable, too orderly. How could such steady and respectable members of society be expected to produce really great poetry? The theory upon which this question is based cannot be discussed here. Let us admit that, for better or worse, the literature of New England has been the wholesome product of a simple and healthy way of living. Longfellow and Whittier — who died Sept. 4, 1892 — undeniably lacked the flexibility of mind and the buoyancy of spirit which belonged to several of their contemporaries, notably Holmes and Lowell. To Holmes, especially, with his sunny temperament and friendly voice, his ripeness of humor and nicety of phrase, our literature is greatly indebted; he is likely to stand, moreover, as one of the few great humorists of the world.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Aug. 29, 1809. His father was an Orthodox Congregational clergyman, who stuck to his Calvinistic colors throughout the period which saw Unitarianism firmly established in Cambridge and Boston: The Unitarian movement is interesting to the student of literature, as one of the signs of the intellectual ripening which made it possible for a powerful literature to spring from the hitherto unpromising soil of Puritan New England. Dr. Holmes himself early became a Unitarian, in the same spirit of fidelity to his belief which had held his father to the older faith. On his graduation from Harvard in 1829, Holmes, like so many other men of literary tastes at that time, turned first toward the bar. After studying for a year and a half, however, he decided that the law was not for him. As the ministry was uncongenial, only one of the three learned professions then considered respectable remained open to him. He studied medicine in Europe for two years and a half, took his degree at the Harvard Medical School in 1836, became Professor at Dartmouth in 1838, and Professor at the Harvard

Medical School in 1847. He was thus away from Cambridge during most of my boyhood, and my memory first depicts him vividly when he came back to give his Phi Beta Kappa poem in 1836. He was at this time a young physician of great promise, which was thought to be rather impaired by his amusing himself with poetry. So, at least, he always thought; and he cautioned in later years a younger physician, Dr. Weir Mitchell, to avoid the fault which he had admitted, advising him to be known exclusively as a physician until his reputation in that line should be made. The effect of levity conveyed by this poem — which was in the main a serious, not to say a ponderous one — was due largely to certain passages which he described as “wanting in dignity.” Especially criticised was one passage in which he gallantly enumerated the probable names of the various young ladies in the gallery, mentioning, for instance,

“A hundred Marys, and that only one
Whose smile awaits me when my song is done.”

These statistics of admiration were not thought altogether suitable to an academic poem, and the claim itself with regard to the

young lady may have proved a little premature, inasmuch as she subsequently married Holmes's friend Motley, the historian.

At the Phi Beta Kappa dinner which followed, he appeared under circumstances which gave his humor free play. Presently there was a cry for Dr. Holmes, and a little man was drawn forward not unwillingly and compelled to stand in a chair where he could be seen and sing his song; and he sang in a voice high and thin, yet well modulated, this touching lay: —

“Where, oh where are the visions of morning,
Fresh as the dews of our prime?
Gone, like tenants that flit without warning,
Down the back entry of Time.

“Where, oh where are life's lilies and roses,
Nursed in the golden dawn's smile?
Dead as the bulrushes round little Moses,
On the old banks of the Nile.

“Where are the Marys, and Anns, and Elizas,
Loving and lovely of yore?
Look in the columns of old Advertisers, —
Married and dead by the score.

“Where the gray colts and the ten-year-old fillies,
Saturday's triumph and joy?
Gone, like our friend πόδας ὠκὺς Achilles,
Homer's ferocious old boy.

“ Yet, though the ebbing of Time’s mighty river
 Leave our young blossoms to die,
Let him roll smooth in his current forever,
 Till the last pebble is dry.”

I had read *Noctes Ambrosianæ* of *Blackwood’s Magazine*, with Christopher North and all the rest of it, but now I felt that I too had at last been admitted to the “ nights and suppers of the gods.”

Holmes’s singularly boyish appearance was at first against his success in the practice of medicine, and he probably had no very great liking for the incessant duties of the “ general practitioner.” That he held his chair of Anatomy at Harvard for many years is sufficient proof of his usefulness in his chosen profession ; though its principal value to the world may now seem to have been that it provided him with a scientific arsenal from which to draw literary weapons not accessible to others.

His success in literature was to be won in an extraordinary way. It is a rare thing for a man nearly fifty years old to strike out a new career, such as in the case of Holmes followed the publication of the *Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. He had, to be sure, begun

a similar venture long before. Two articles under the same title had appeared twenty-five years earlier in the *New England Magazine*. They had not attracted much attention, and were, as a whole, rather crude, but the general method employed, with its pleasant conversational flavor, and easy discursive style, was the method which best expressed the nature of the author in his maturity. When in 1857 the *Atlantic Monthly* was founded, and Lowell became its editor, he stipulated that Dr. Holmes should be the first contributor engaged ; and the first instalment of the *Autocrat* appeared in the opening number. Upon this series of papers Holmes's fame may stand ; they represent the fine flowering of his genius for intimate discourse, and include, besides, much of the best of his verse. His later work in the same vein, however, is less delightful only because it is, in a sense, the "second growth" of an extraordinarily fertile mind.

In poetry his taste was conservative. He disliked modern experiments in irregular versification, and held to the somewhat rigid "correctness" of the school of Pope. His own verses were consequently of uniform

(Private)

Boston Sept 30th 1872

My dear Mr. Higginson,

Your kind words are pleasant and your request is far from unreasonable, yet I must excuse myself from the very slight task - as it seems at least - to which you wish me.

I am thoroughly tired of my own voice at all sorts of occasional gatherings. I have handled the epithets of eulogy until the mere touch of a warm adjective blisters my palm. I have tried not to do myself discredit by unseemly flattery, but I do really feel as if by force of repetition my welcomes were grating if not

unwelcome, at least outworn,
and should in common propriety
give place to something a little fresher.
I have greeted representatives from
all parts of the Indies and
half-Indies world and am
expecting to be called on whenever
the King of Dahomey or a minister
from Ujiji makes his appearance.

The most desperate attempts were
made by men with argument
and women with entreaty to get
me to play Orpheus to the stones of
the Pittsburg monument, but I resisted
both successfully. These invitations
keep coming to me all the time,
and I mean to decline them all
until for some very special reason
that happens to strike me. Just in

the centre of volition. Here are
Albion, and Edmund Yates, and
George MacDonald, and nobody
knew how many more - Lyndall
and by and by perhaps Kipling
and one must draw this
thin line somewhere - Suppose we
say "Rhyming done here only
for crowned heads or their repre-
sentatives?" I have done England,
France, Russia (twice) China, Japan,
Germany (in the person of Ehrenberg)
and so belaboured my own
countrymen of every degree with
occasional verses that I must
have coupled "name" and "fame"
together scores of times and made
"shy" and "glory" as intimate as
if they had been born twins.

I know you are on your knees
by this time asking the Lord to

Forgive me for making a
suggestion that I should try
this last experiment on the patience
of mankind. I cannot say whether
He will forgive me or not but you
have my full pardon inasmuch
as you have joined a very complimentary
request with a word of praise
which coming from so good a judge
of what will bear praising makes me
willing to do almost anything except
just what you ask me to.

Always truly Yours
O. W. Holmes.

smoothness and elegance; and as the best of them are marked by fineness rather than depth of feeling, it is not likely that a freer treatment would have increased their power.

Once or twice, in poems like *The Chambered Nautilus* and *The Last Leaf*, the poet seems to have risen above the grade of the kindly urbanity which made him one of the best of "occasional" verse-writers. Of his novels, it need only be said here that they are likely to hold their own for some time as interesting by-products of powers which found their main expression elsewhere.

Holmes is important to American literature not only as a singularly approachable and effective personality, but as in every way the product of his time and place. His favorite character, Little Boston, was a fanciful exaggeration of his own innocent cockneyism. In his day Beacon Street was still precisely what he called it, "The sunny street that holds the sifted few." More than for America, perhaps, he stood for Boston, and for New England "Brahminism." That was not the final type of Americanism, but it was one of the most important nineteenth-century types, and to represent it fitly in literature

constituted a valuable service to the country. Holmes died Oct. 7, 1894.

James Russell Lowell was born in Cambridge, Feb. 22, 1819. His father was a Unitarian minister of old Massachusetts stock. As a schoolboy Lowell showed little regular industry, but a great deal of cleverness and an insatiable hunger for good reading.

The first letter from Lowell which I have in my collection, written somewhere about the age of fourteen, shows how early the quality of humor set in. It was written on the occasion of returning to my brother Thacher a volume of Sallust, an author then required for examination by those entering college.

COPY.

[*Verbatim ac Literatim.*]

MY DEAR THACH.

In the course of
human events when the mind
becomes indued with active
spirit with powerfull imagin
ation, with extensive enter prise
with noble design ty - Then
My boy. Then! is the
time to return to you
this - Sallust

Yrs

J. R. L.

In this cheery announcement there is a curious foreshadowing of the "imaginings," "enterprises," and "designties" of his own life, and we can see whence he derived that gay and elastic spirit which made his later lectures delightful to his students at the University when he "opened a new world to them" in Professor Barrett Wendell's phrase; or, in the phrase of Mr. Henry James, made a "romance of the hour" for them. "It was," the latter continues, "an unforgettable initiation. He was so steeped in history and literature that to some yearning young persons, he made the taste of knowledge sweeter, almost, than it was ever to be again."

Like Irving and Longfellow and Holmes, he first turned to the law for support, and went so far as to be admitted to the bar; but he had less heart, even, for the actual practice of law than Holmes for the practice of medicine. He had also a firmer purpose of gaining success in literature, and sedulously trained himself to be a writer. In 1844 he married Maria White, a gifted and cultivated woman, whose criticism and sympathy were of great value to her husband's work, and whose reformatory feeling called

forth much of that quality in him. Their income was small, but by dint of lecturing and writing for the magazines — which then offered a very limited field even for a Lowell — they made shift to live. Mrs. Lowell died in 1853, and only one of her four children survived her.

In the meantime Lowell's reputation as a man of letters had become secure, and in 1855 he was appointed Longfellow's successor in the chair of Modern Languages and Belles-Lettres at Harvard. The rest of his career is too well known to be enlarged upon in this narrative. He was one of the founders and the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*; Minister to Spain, and, later, to England; and he died, Aug. 12, 1891, the recognized premier of American letters, and not the least of American men of affairs.

His standing in literature is probably less easily determinable than that of Holmes; and this for a reason which at first seems strange. As to fertility of mind, abundance of resources, variety of knowledge, there was scarcely any difference in the two persons; the head of water was the same, and why was it that in the case of Holmes the stream

flowed so much more smoothly? It was Lowell who had accepted literature as his sphere, while Holmes regarded it as a mere avocation; yet it was Lowell who never quite attained smoothness or finish of utterance, while Holmes easily developed it. Lowell was always liable to entanglement in his own wealth of thought and fancy. His style is rich and often delightful; yet it must be said both of his prose and his verse, that his immense fertility of mind constantly led him into confused rhetoric and mixed metaphors. He lacked, in short, the pure taste and tireless "capacity for taking pains" which belong to the literary artist.

The permanence of his verse is especially imperiled by this defect. Brilliant and spontaneous as it is, very little of it possesses the absolute quality of good poetry. His form does not grow inevitably out of his theme, and consequently his style is what a great style never is, the "dress" of his thought. While, therefore, he composed more impulsively and rapidly than Holmes, he never produced a strain quite so pure and perfect and certain of a place in the treasury of English poetry as *The Chambered Nautilus*. He

was, for better and worse, more a poet of his own day than Holmes. Even in *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, he could not, as Holmes noted, forget his American landscape or his modern point of view ; and his greater successes, from *The Biglow Papers* to the *Commemoration Ode*, were essentially poems of occasion.

It was immensely to the advantage of Lowell as a direct human force that he was so frankly a man of the hour. Longfellow in his quiet scholastic life and Holmes in his office of urbane spectator seem a little remote, by comparison, from the more eager questions of their day. Yet Lowell's best work was done in a field of pure letters toward the cultivation of which America had before his time done very little. His criticism of contemporaries cannot, for the most part, be greatly praised. In the period of Lowell's literary bringing-up the traditions of the English Christopher North had reached over to America, and men had learned to measure merit by stings. The *Edinburgh Review* had set the example, and the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's Magazine* had followed it. The recognized way to deal with a literary heretic was to crush

Southborough.

7th Dec:

My dear Higginson,

Many thanks for your
kind letter. I too have been hoping that
I might meet you, & still hope.

As for Thursday evening,
I must say no. I am obliged this week
to spend Tuesday & Wednesday night in
Boston & to come down again on
Saturday. I must come back hither on
Thursday afternoon in order to have Friday
at my disposal. Moreover I know
nothing about Tourgenieff - unless my meeting
him once in Paris be knowing something
I have never read one of his books.

Faithfully yours

Colonel Higginson

S. M. Lowell.

him. Among authors, too, it was a time of defiant and vehement mutual criticism ; it was thought a fine thing to impale somebody, to make somebody writhe, to get even with somebody, and it was hard for the younger men to keep clear of the flattering temptation. Poe in New York proceeded cheerfully with these tactics, and Lowell in Cambridge was only too ready to follow his example. In Lowell's *Fable for Critics* you find the beginning of all this : in his prose you will find an essay on "Percival" which is essentially in the line of these English examples, and that on "Thoreau" is little better ; and worse than either, perhaps, is his article on "Milton," nine tenths of which is vehement and almost personal in its denunciation of Professor Masson, a man of the highest character and the most generous nature, though sometimes too generous of his words. What makes the matter worse is that Lowell charges the sin of "wearisomeness" upon both Masson and Milton himself, and yet the keen Fitzgerald selects one sentence of Lowell's in this very essay as an illustration of that same sin. Lowell says of Milton's prose tracts : —

"Yet it must be confessed that, with the single exception of the *Areopagitica*, Milton's tracts are wearis-

some reading, and going through them is like a long sea voyage whose monotony is more than compensated for the moment by a stripe of phosphorescence leaping before you in a drift of star-sown snow, coiling away behind in winking disks of silver, as if the conscious element were giving out all the moonlight it had garnered in its loyal depths since first it gazed upon its pallid regent."

The criticism on Lowell comes with force from FitzGerald, who always cultivated condensation, and it also recalls the remark of Walter Pater, that "the true artist may be best recognized by his skill in omission."

Apart from his bent for personalities, however, and from the question of his ability to practice what he preached, there is in the substance of his best prose work a sound body of criticism such as no other American has yet produced. For scholarship, incisiveness, and suggestiveness, such papers as the essays on Dryden, Pope, and Dante have been surpassed by very little criticism written in English.

The special service of the New England literature of the middle of the nineteenth century was to achieve an enlargement of the national horizon. In Cambridge, as we have seen, the expansion was primarily mental and æsthetic; in Concord, as we are about to see, it was mainly speculative and spiritual.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONCORD GROUP

BEFORE proceeding to deal with the individual members of the Concord group, we must understand what that "Transcendentalism" was with which we Transcendentalism. commonly associate their names. Perhaps one ought not to speak of understanding it, for it hardly understood itself. It was less a philosophy than an impulse, and our interest in it must now be due to the fact, first, that it was an impulse most useful to the America of that day, and, second, that it was strongly felt by many of the leading spirits of the time. It was, in brief, an impulse toward an absolute freedom, intellectual, spiritual, and social. Naturally, its best results were in the nature of subtle suggestion and inspiration to a generation which greatly needed to broaden its horizon. Its more concrete experiments were often fantastic and short-lived, though never ignoble. That

curious journal of the Transcendentalists, the *Dial*, lived only four years; the Brook Farm community held together for seven years. The whole movement had about it much that was visionary and merely odd as well as much that was true and noble; but it had, on the whole, great power for good in that day, as, through the expression of its spirit by Emerson, it has even now.

In coming to Emerson we arrive at the controlling influence, if not the creator, of modern American thought. Emerson never could have said what Lady Diana Beauclerc wrote from Bath, one foggy day: "A thousand children are running by the window. I should like to whip every one of them for not being mine." In Emerson's case the spiritual children are all his; they are still running by, and perhaps we must admit that the day sometimes looks foggy, and the children sometimes deserve whipping.

Emerson was born in Boston, May 25, 1803, and had a clerical ancestor for eight

Ralph	generations back, on one side or
Waldo	the other and sometimes on both.
Emerson.	

His mother, a widow, was obliged to economize strictly, and it is recorded that

Emerson once went without the second volume of a book because his aunt had convinced him that his mother could not afford to pay six cents upon it at the Circulating Library. At college he was younger than most of his classmates, but was apt to be successful in competition for the few literary prizes then offered by the college. His classmate Josiah Quincy, who gained the first prize in one case where Emerson got the second, on an ethical subject, remarked in his diary that "the dissertation on ethics was dull and dry;" and as he also regarded Emerson's Class Day poem as "rather poor," it is worth while to remember that there is no known criticism quite so merciless as that of college boys upon one another. It was with these credentials, at any rate, that Emerson went forth into the world in 1821 and became himself a clergyman.

Ten years later he had retired from the pulpit and was on his way to Europe, where he stayed nearly a year. It was during this visit that he made the acquaintance of Landor and Wordsworth, as described in *English Traits*. He also went to Craigenputtock to see Carlyle, who long afterwards, talking

with Longfellow, described his visit as being like the visit of an angel. This was the beginning of that lifelong friendship the terms of which are recorded in their published correspondence. "The dear Emerson," said Carlyle to an American forty years later, "he thinks that the whole world is as good as himself." After his return to Boston, Emerson entered that secular pulpit called in those days the Lyceum, or lecture platform. For half a century he was one of the leading lecturers of the country. He spoke in forty successive seasons before the Salem Lyceum. Much of the success of these addresses came from the unique simplicity and dignity of his manner. There was a legend of a woman in a town near Concord, who once avowed frankly that she could not understand a word he said, but she loved to watch him lecturing, because he looked so good. His calm and sonorous oratory, once heard, seemed to roll through every sentence of his that the student afterwards read, and his very peculiarities, the occasional pause, accompanied by a deep gaze of the eyes into the distance, "looking in the corner for rats," as an irreverent Boston young lady once described it, or an apparent

hesitation in the selection of a word, — felicitously preparing the way, like Charles Lamb's stammer, for some stroke of mother-wit, — these were a part of the man. It sometimes occurred that his auditors helped him, unconsciously, in the effect of his oratory. Thus I can recall the occasion when he exclaimed, in the middle of a lecture, "Beware how you unmuzzle the valetudinarian!" when a slight bustle was noticed among the seats, and one of the best known men in Boston, a man of striking appearance, was seen bearing out in his arms his wife, one of the best known women in Boston and a good deal of an invalid, who had apparently been unmuzzled by that particular sentence. Emerson always shrank from extemporaneous speech, though he was sometimes most effective in its use. He wrote of himself once as "the worst known public speaker and growing continually worse;" but his most studied remarks had the effect of offhand conviction from the weight and beauty of his elocution.

It was in the year 1834 that Emerson retired to his father's birthplace, Concord, and became a dweller for the rest of his life in what was at first a small rural village. If

Cambridge was small compared to Boston, Concord was still smaller compared to Cambridge ; and, like Cambridge, it held, then or soon after, an unusual proportion of cultivated people. It is said to have been remarked by Bret Harte, when he first came to Cambridge from California, that the town was so full of authors "you could not fire a revolver from your front door without bringing down a two-volumer." The same state of things soon presented itself at Concord, although the front doors were fewer, and the dwellers rarely limited themselves to two volumes. Emerson soon sent forth from this new retreat his first thin book, entitled *Nature*. From the beginning to the end of this first volume, the fact is clear that it was consciously and deliberately a new departure. Those ninety brief pages were an undisguised challenge to the world. On the very first page the author complains that our age is retrospective, — that others have " beheld God and nature face to face ; we only through their eyes. Why should not we," he says, " also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradi-

tion?" Thus the book begins, and on the very last page it ends, "Build, therefore, your own world!"

At any time, and under almost any conditions, the first reading of such words by any young person would be a great event in life, but in the comparative conventionalism of the literature of that period it had the effect of a revelation. It was six years later, July, 1840, that the first number of the *Dial* was published, and on the very first page the editors speak of "a strong current of thought and feeling which for a few years past has led many sincere persons in New England to make new demands on literature." In Emerson's paper in the second number of the *Dial*, he says, "What shall hinder the genius of the time from speaking its thought? It cannot be silent if it would. It will write in a higher spirit and wider knowledge and with a grander practical aim than ever yet guided the pen of poet . . . and that which was ecstasy shall become daily bread."

From this time he was identified with Concord, and his house was for many years what Lord Clarendon called the house of Lord Falkland, "a college situated in purer air"

and "a university in less volume." Emerson's books appeared in rapid succession, and his fame extended far beyond his native land. It is probable that no writer of the English tongue had more influence in England thirty years ago, before the all-absorbing interest of the new theories of evolution threw all the so-called transcendental philosophy into temporary shade. This influence has now plainly revived, since the stress of the Darwinian period has passed, and one is sure to see one of Emerson's books on any English or American list of republished classics.

As a master of language, it may be fearlessly said that within the limits of a single sentence no man who ever wrote the English tongue has put more meaning into words than Emerson. In his hands, to adopt Ben Jonson's phrase, "words are rammed with thought." In all literature you will find no man who has better fulfilled that aspiration stated in such condensed phrase by Joubert: "To put a whole book into a page, a whole page into a phrase and that phrase into a word." Emerson himself said of the Greeks that they "anticipated by their very language what the best orator could say;" and

London, 18 July, 1864
Col. T. W. Higginson.

My dear Sir,

The accident
of a crowded week has
hindered me from making
any return for your letter
which at another time would
have claimed instant atten-
tion. We are all deep
in debt to you, & I more
than most. I have heard
with alarm that your
health was seriously im-
paired, but I hoped not so
seriously as to deprive

the Army of the rare
incomparable value
of a Soldier of Character,
as well as of eminent
abilities, & who could
impart to, as well as
receive from the Nation
the best direction. Hap-
pily, it is impossible for
you to be idle, & no matter
in what retirement
you will be forced to
be one of our favorites.
Meantime, I rejoice that
your case is taken in
season, & to be good a

hospital, wherein to heal
your hurts. And if we
lose you from the field, it
is excellent to have a
second & better arm. You
will come back to so many
old studies with the basis
of the rhetoric of new
experience. So I am forced
to live you joy in any view
I take of your position.

It would give me much
pleasure to talk with you
if obstructive & all-absorbing
politics permitted, - on
the topics you suggest, of the

moral ~~religions~~ aspects
of society, at this moment
I observe that in France,
in England, in America,
the same things are being
said, or the same sentiment is
implied, if not quite
articulated. and I often
feel that the appearance
of an enthusiastic moral
genius, a new Zeno or
Buddh, thinking & acting
with simplicity, would
crystallize the Chaos, &
begin the new world. But
this is for the beginning not
the end of a note. Yours in
the best hope & R. W. Emerson

neither Greek precision nor Roman vigor could produce a phrase that Emerson could not match. Who stands in all literature as the master of condensation if not Tacitus? Yet Emerson, in his speech at the anti-Kansas meeting in Cambridge, quoted that celebrated remark by Tacitus as to the ominousness of the fact that the effigies of Brutus and Cassius were not carried at a certain state funeral; and in translating it Emerson bettered the original. The indignant phrase of Tacitus is, "*Praefulgebant . . . eo ipso quod . . . non visebantur*," "They shone conspicuous from the very fact that they were not seen," thus enforcing a moral lesson in fourteen Latin syllables; but Emerson gives it in seven English syllables and translates it, even more powerfully: "They glared through their absences." After all it is such tests as this which give literary immortality, — the perfection of a phrase, — and if you say that nevertheless there is nothing accomplished unless an author has given us a system of the universe, it can only be said that Emerson never desired to do this; and, indeed, left on record the opinion that the world is "too young by some ages yet to form a creed." The

system-makers have their place, no doubt, but when we consider how many of them have risen and fallen since Emerson began to write, — Schelling, Cousin, Comte, Mill, down to the Hegel of yesterday and the Spencer of to-day, — it is evident that the absence of a system is not the only thing which may shorten fame.

Emerson's precise position as a poet cannot yet be assigned. He has been likened to an æolian harp which now gives and then perversely withholds its music. Nothing can exceed the musical perfection of the lines: —

“Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
Or dip thy paddle in the lake,
But it carves the bow of beauty there,
And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake.”

Yet within the compass of this same fine poem (*Woodnotes*) there are passages which elicited from Theodore Parker, one of the poet's most ardent admirers, the opinion that “a pine tree which should talk as Mr. Emerson's tree talks would deserve to be plucked up and cast into the sea.” His poetic reputation came distinctly later in time than his fame as an essayist and lecturer. Like Wordsworth and Tennyson, he educated the

public mind to himself. The same verses which were received with shouts of laughter when they first appeared in the *Dial* were treated with respectful attention when collected into a volume, and it is possible that some of them may take their places among the classic poems of all literature.

It is evident from Emerson's criticisms in the *Dial*, as that on Ellery Channing's poems, that he had a horror of what he called "French correctness" and could more easily pardon what was rough than what was tame. When it came to passing judgment on the details of poetry, he was sometimes whimsical; his personal favorites were apt to be swans, and, on the other hand, there were whole classes of great writers whom he hardly recognized at all. This was true of Shelley, for example, about whom he wrote "though uniformly a poetic mind, he is never a poet." About prose writers his estimate was a shade more trustworthy, yet he probably never quite appreciated Hawthorne, and certainly discouraged young people from reading his books. He died May 6, 1882.

There were grouped about Emerson in Concord, or frequently visiting it, several per-

sons of the Transcendental School whom we must not pass by. One of these Theodore Parker. was Theodore Parker, that eminent heretic, who has had the curious experience of being at last held up to admiration by the very churches which once cast him out. In a literary way, he was the most profitable contributor of the *Dial*, his manner being much more popular than the rest, so that Mr. Emerson used to say that the only numbers which sold well were those which had Theodore Parker's articles in them. He was a systematic student on a large scale, which Emerson was not, and he was also a man of action, wearing himself out by such a variety of labors that his lifetime was short. There is no one whom Lowell hits off better in the *Fable for Critics*: —

“Here comes Parker, the Orson of parsons, a man
Whom the Church undertook to put under her ban.

.
But the ban was too small or the man was too big,
For he recks not their bells, books, and candles a fig.

.
Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnaced
In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest:
There he stands, looking more like a ploughman than
priest,
If not dreadfully awkward, not graceful at least,

His gestures all downright and same, if you will,
 As of brown-fisted Hobnail in hoeing a drill ;
 But his periods fall on you, stroke after stroke,
 Like the blows of a lumberer felling an oak ;
 You forget the man wholly, you're thankful to meet
 With a preacher who smacks of the field and the street,
 And to hear, you're not over-particular whence,
 Almost Taylor's profusion, quite Latimer's sense."

A more immediate ally of Emerson, as the first leading editor of the *Dial*, was the most remarkable American woman up to our time, in the literary path at least, Margaret Fuller, afterwards Madame Ossoli. She not only had to edit it for nothing and man it with good contributors for nothing, but to criticise even Emerson's contributions, sometimes greatly to his advantage, and to steer between the demands of the popular and matter-of-fact Theodore Parker, on the one side, and the dreamy Alcott, on the other. Of one number she was forced to write eighty-five out of its hundred and thirty-six pages herself, and after two years had to resign the task. Carlyle, who always criticised the American Transcendentalists severely, excepted only her, besides Emerson, among its writers. He called her writings "the undeniable utter-

ances of a true heroic mind, altogether unique, so far as I know, among the writing women of this generation."

The last of Emerson's immediate and closest friends, and one whom he always placed
Bronson far above himself, was Amos Bron-
Alcott. son Alcott, in one respect a more characteristic New England product than any of the others, inasmuch as he rose from a very humble source to be one of the leading influences of the time, in spite of all whims and oddities. Regarding himself as a fore-ordained teacher and always assuming that attitude to all, he yet left on record utterances which show an entire lack of vanity at heart. For instance, he wrote thus from Concord in 1865: "Have been also at Lynn and Haverhill speaking lately. Certainly men need teaching badly enough when any words of mine can help them. Yet I would fain believe that not I, but the Spirit, the Person, sometimes speaks to revive and spare." In the children's stories of his daughter he took a father's satisfaction, however far her sphere seemed from his own. There were one or two occasions when he showed himself brave where others had flinched. One

of the heroic pictures yet waiting to be painted in New England history is that of the tranquil and high-minded philosopher at the time during a fugitive slave case, when the rear entrance of the Boston Court House, then temporarily used as a slave-pen, had been beaten in, and the few who got inside had been driven out by the police, the mob hesitating to follow them. There was the open door with the gaslights burning brightly upon it and the pistols of the marshal's men showing themselves above the inner stairway. Outside were the vacant steps and the crowd of lookers-on. Quietly there penetrated the mob the figure of a white-haired man, like the ghost of an ancient Puritan; he mounted the steps tranquilly, cane in hand, and pausing near the top said to one of the ringleaders of the attack, pointing placidly forward, "Why are we not within?" "Because," said the person addressed, "these people will not stand by us." He paused again at the top, the centre of all eyes from within and from without. A revolver was fired from within, and finding himself wholly unsupported he turned and walked down, without hastening a step. Neither Plato nor

Pythagoras could have done the thing better; and the whole event brought back vividly the appearance of the Gray Champion in one of Hawthorne's tales.

But Alcott now bids fair to be remembered only for the influence which he had upon greater men. His personality could impose itself upon those who saw him and heard his words, but could find no effective expression in literature. Just the contrary was true of Nathaniel Hawthorne. He was, to be sure, a Hawthorne. man of striking presence, and his physical strength and stateliness irresistibly connected themselves in the minds of those who saw him with the self-contained purpose, the large resources, the waiting power, of the great writer. I first met him on a summer morning in Concord, as he was walking along the road near the Old Manse, with his wife by his side, and a noble-looking baby-boy in a little wagon which the father was pushing. I remember him as tall, firm, and strong in bearing; his wife looked pensive and dreamy, as she indeed was, then and always. When I passed, Hawthorne lifted upon me his great gray eyes, with a look too keen to seem indifferent, too shy to be sym-

Fulcrum Dec 14 1848.

My dear W.

At last, by main strength, I have wrenched and torn an idea out of my miserable brain; or rather, the fragment of an idea, like a tooth ill-drawn, and leaving the roots to Fortune use. I shall send it to you by express to-day or tomorrow. Perhaps you will not like it; if so, make no ceremony about rejecting it. I am as tractable an author as you ever knew, so far as putting my articles into the fair press; though I cannot abide alterations or improvements.

I am ashamed, as a Yankee, and lawyer of the revenue, to say that I had not paid proper consideration to the terms of payment, mentioned in two of your letters. I concluded your first statement to be as liberal as circumstances would allow, and should still think so, if you did not yourself tell me to the contrary.

When shall you want another article? Now that the spell is broken, I hope to let into a regular train of scribbling; — perhaps not, however; for I have many impediments to the struggle of pen and ink.

Pray continue to write freely to me. I feel a real interest in the success of your enterprise.
Very truly yours, Nathl Hawthorne.

pathetic — and that was all. But it comes back to memory like that one glimpse of Shelley which Browning describes, and which he likens to the day when he found an eagle's feather.

It is surprising to be asked whether Hawthorne was not physically very small. It seems at the moment utterly inconceivable that he could have been anything less than the sombre and commanding personage he was. Ellery Channing well describes him as a

“Tall, compacted figure, ably strung,
To urge the Indian chase, or point the way.”

One can imagine any amount of positive energy — that of Napoleon Bonaparte, for instance — as included within a small physical frame. But the self-contained purpose of Hawthorne, the large resources, the waiting power, — these seem to the imagination to imply an ample basis of physical life; and certainly his stately and noble port is inseparable, in my memory, from these characteristics. Again I met Hawthorne at one of the sessions of a short-lived literary club; and I recall the imperturbable dignity and patience with which he sat through a vexatious

discussion, whose details seemed as much dwarfed by his presence as if he had been a statue of Olympian Zeus.

The events of his life may be briefly given. He was born in Salem, July 4, 1804, of an old Salem family. One of his ancestors was a judge in some of the famous witch trials, and had, according to tradition, brought a curse upon his descendants by his severity. Born of such stock, and bred in such surroundings, it is no wonder that Hawthorne became early the romantic interpreter of that sombre code and mode of living which we call Puritanism. His boyhood was given more to general reading than to study. He graduated from Bowdoin, with Longfellow, in 1825, and spent twelve quiet years at Salem writing and re-writing; publishing little, and that through the most inconspicuous channels: becoming, in short, as he said, "the obscurest man of letters in America." Not until the publication of *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) did he obtain recognition. A brief residence in the Brook Farm community gave him the materials for *The Blithedale Romance*. In 1841 he was married, and settled in the Old Manse at Concord, which, some years later, he made

famous in *Mosses from an Old Manse*. He afterwards held a post in the Salem Custom House for three years; during which period he wrote little, but *The Scarlet Letter* gradually took shape in his mind. It was published in 1850, to be followed during the two succeeding years by *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*. Then followed seven years in Europe, four of them at the Liverpool consulate, and, as a result, his last great romance, *The Marble Faun*. He died May 19, 1864.

Hawthorne we all agree to be the greatest American imaginative prose writer; and his place in the literature of our tongue becomes every day more sure. If his genius matured slowly, it did really mature. His notebooks are frequently commonplace; probably because his art was massive and deliberate, and he had no faculty for spinning delight out of next to nothing. His personality, too, was of a subtlety and remoteness which could not be interpreted colloquially; perhaps it was only in his rarest creative moments that the man was intimate with himself. Of the originality of his best work we do, at all events, feel more certain than we

can of any other American's ; and this because its unique quality consists not in queer-ness or cleverness, but in the reflection of a strong and sane and whole personality. Dickens and Bulwer and Thackeray were among Hawthorne's contemporary English novelists, but he has far less in common with any of them than they have with each other, either in manner or in spirit. Hawthorne's work was, in fact, the product of two principal impulses : a reaching toward the moral intensity of old New England Puritanism, and toward the spiritual subtlety of modern New England Transcendentalism. But he is not finally to be classified either as Puritan or Transcendentalist, for all the elements of his nature were fused as they can be only in the great artist ; and it is as an artist in the largest sense of the word that Hawthorne is likely to be known.

One of the most characteristic of his literary methods is his habitual use of guarded under-statements and veiled hints. It is not a sign of weakness, but of conscious strength, when he qualifies his statements, takes you into his counsels, offers hypotheses, as, " May it not have been ? " or, " Shall we not rather

say?" and sometimes, like a conjurer, urges particularly upon you the card he does not intend you to accept. He seems not quite to know whether Arthur Dimmesdale really had a fiery scar on his breast, or whether Donatello had furry ears, or what finally became of Miriam and her lover. He will gladly share with you any information he possesses, and, indeed, has several valuable hints to offer; but that is all. The result is, that you place yourself by his side to look with him at his characters, and gradually share with him the conviction that they must be real. Then, when he has you in his possession, he leaves you to discover the profound spiritual truth involved in the story.

I have always thought him in this respect to have been influenced, or at least anticipated, by a writer who has been too much overlooked, and whose influence upon him seems to me quite perceptible, although his biographer, Prof. Woodberry, is disposed to set it entirely aside. This was William Austin, the author of *Peter Rugg, the Missing Man*, a delineation more Hawthornesque, in my opinion, than anything in Scott, to whom Prof. Woodberry rightfully assigns some slight in-

fluence over Hawthorne. This tale was first printed in Buckingham's *New England Galaxy* for Sept. 10, 1824; and that editor says of it: "This article was reprinted in other papers and books, and read more than any newspaper communication that has fallen within my knowledge."

The original story purports to belong to the year 1820, and the scene of a later continuation is laid in the year 1825, both these being reprinted in the *Boston Book* for 1841, and in the lately republished works of William Austin. It is the narrative, in the soberest language, of a series of glimpses of a man who spends his life in driving a horse and chaise—or more strictly "a weather-beaten chair, once built for a chaise-body"—in the direction of Boston, but never getting there, until extreme old age. He is accompanied by a child; and it subsequently turns out that he really left Boston about the time of the Boston massacre, before the Revolution (1770), and has been traveling ever since,—the explanation being that he was once overtaken by a storm at Menotomy, now Arlington, a few miles from Boston, and that being a man of violent temper he swore to

get home that night or never see home again. Thenceforth he is always traveling ; a cloud and a storm always follow him, and every horse that sees his approach feels abject terror. The conception is essentially Hawthorne-like ; and so are the scene and the accessories. The time to which Rugg's career dates back is that border land of which Hawthorne was so fond, between the colonial and the modern period ; and the old localities, dates, costumes, and even coins are all introduced in a way to remind us of the greater artist. But what is most striking in the tale is what may be called the *penumbra*, — a word defined in astronomy as that portion of space which in an eclipse is partly but not entirely deprived of light ; and in painting, as the boundary of shade and light, where the one blends with the other. He seems in a manner to consult with the reader as to the true view, and often puts first that which he does not believe. It is this precise gift which has long been recognized as almost peculiar to Hawthorne among writers, and yet he shares it with the author of *Peter Rugg*, a book written while Hawthorne was a boy in college.

For all these merits Hawthorne paid one high and inexorable penalty, — the utter absence of all immediate or dazzling success. His publisher, Goodrich, tells us in his *Recollections*, that Hawthorne and Willis began to write together in the *Token*, in 1827, and that the now forgotten Willis “rose rapidly to fame,” while Hawthorne’s writings “did not attract the slightest attention.” For twenty years he continued to be, according to his own statement, “the obscurest man of letters in America.” Goodrich testifies that it was almost impossible to find a publisher for *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837, and I can myself remember how limited a circle greeted the reprint in the enlarged edition of 1841. When Poe, about 1846, wrote patronizingly of Hawthorne, he added, “It was never the fashion, until lately, to speak of him in any summary of our best authors.” Whittier once told me that when he himself had obtained, with some difficulty, in 1847, the insertion of one of Hawthorne’s sketches in the *National Era*, the latter said quietly, “There is not much market for my wares.” It has always seemed to me the greatest triumph of his genius, not that he

bore poverty without a murmur, — for what right has a literary man, who can command his time and his art, to sigh after wealth? — but that he went on doing work of such a quality for an audience so small or so indifferent.

We pass now to the youngest of the well-known Concord authors of that circle, and one who, unlike the others, practi- Henry Da-
cally failed to win high apprecia- vid Thoreau.
tion during life, and passed into the other world apparently unsuccessful. There is no fame really more permanent than that which begins its actual growth after the death of an author; and such is the fame of Thoreau. Before his death he had published but two books, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* and *Walden*. Nine more have since been printed, besides two volumes of selected extracts and two biographies, making fifteen in all. Such things are not accidental or the result of whim, and they indicate that the literary fame of Thoreau is secure. Indeed, it has already survived two of the greatest dangers that can beset reputation, — a brilliant satirist for a critic, and an injudicious friend for a biographer.

This friend, the late Ellery Channing, was a man of wayward genius, and of voluntary self-withdrawal from the world. Both he in his memoir and Lowell in his well-known criticism, have brought the eccentricities of Thoreau into undue prominence, and have placed too little stress on the vigor, the good sense, the clear perceptions, of the man. One who has himself walked, talked, corresponded with him, can testify that the impression given by both these writers is far removed from that ordinarily made by Thoreau himself. While tinged here and there, like most American thinkers of his time, with the manner of Emerson, he was yet, as a companion, essentially original, wholesome, and enjoyable. Though more or less of a humorist, nursing his own whims, and capable of being tiresome when they came uppermost, he was easily led away from them to the vast domains of literature and nature, and then poured forth endless streams of the most interesting talk. He taxed the patience of his companions, but not more so, on the whole, than is the case with most eminent talkers when launched upon their favorite themes.

Lowell accepts throughout the popular misconception — and has, indeed, done much to strengthen it — that Thoreau hated civilization, and believed only in the wilderness; whereas Thoreau defined his own position on this point with exceeding clearness, and made it essentially the same with that of his critics. “For a permanent residence,” he says, “it seemed to me that there could be no comparison between this [Concord] and the wilderness, necessary as the latter is for a resource and a background, the raw material of all our civilization. The wilderness is simple almost to barrenness. The partially cultivated country it is which chiefly has inspired, and will continue to inspire, the strains of poets such as compose the mass of any literature.”

In the light of such eminently sensible remarks as these, it will by and by be discovered that Thoreau's whole attitude has been needlessly distorted. Lowell says that “his shanty-life was mere impossibility, so far as his own conception of it goes, as an entire independency of mankind. The tub of Diogenes had a sounder bottom.” But what a man of straw is this that Lowell is constructing! What is this “shanty-life?” A young man

living in a country village, and having a passion for the minute observation of nature, and a love for Greek and Oriental reading, takes it into his head to build himself a study, not in the garden or the orchard, but in the woods, by the side of a lake. Happening to be poor, and to live in a time when social experiments are in vogue at Brook Farm and elsewhere, he takes a whimsical satisfaction in seeing how cheaply he can erect his hut, and afterwards support himself by the labor of his hands. He is not really banished from the world, nor does he seek or profess banishment: indeed, his house is not two miles from his mother's door; and he goes to the village every day or two, by his own showing, to hear the news. In this quiet abode he spends two years, varied by an occasional excursion into the deeper wilderness at a distance. He earns an honest living by gardening and land-surveying, makes more close and delicate observations on nature than any other American has ever made, and writes one of the few books, perhaps the only book, yet written in America, that can bear an annual perusal. Can it be really true that this is a life so wasted, so unpardonable?

Let us not do injustice to Lowell, who closes his paper on Thoreau with a generous tribute that does much to redeem his earlier injustice. The truth is, that Thoreau shared the noble protest against worldliness of what is called the "transcendental" period, in America, and naturally shared some of the intellectual extravagances of that seething time ; but he did not, like some of his contemporaries, make his whims an excuse for mere selfishness, and his home life — always the best test — was thoroughly affectionate and faithful. His lifelong celibacy was due, as has been asserted, to an early act of lofty self-abnegation toward his own brother, whose love had taken the same direction as his own. Certainly his personal fortitude amid the privations and limitations of his career was nothing less than heroic. There is nothing finer in literary history than his description, in his unpublished diary, of receiving from his publisher the unsold copies — nearly the whole edition — of his *Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, and of his carrying the melancholy burden upstairs on his shoulders to his study. "I have now a library," he says, "of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself."

In the late volume giving memorials of one of the last of the Transcendentalists, Daniel Ricketson, of New Bedford, there are interesting glimpses of the time when Lowell's article on Thoreau was supposed to have well-nigh suppressed him as an author. Thoreau's sister wrote to Ricketson, it seems, "I have too much respect for Mr. Lowell's powers of discrimination to account at all for his blundering and most unfriendly attack upon Henry's book," and Ricketson himself adds, "Lowell's nature is wholly inadequate to take in Thoreau. Lowell thought Thoreau was posing for effect. I am satisfied that Thoreau could not possibly play a part." He then winds up with one of those seemingly daring combinations with which the Transcendentalists innocently startled more decorous ears: "I rank Christ Jesus, Socrates, and Thoreau as the sincerest souls that ever walked the earth."

"In literature nothing counts but genius," yet the length of time which sifts out genius is an uncertain quantity. In the Boston of that period it was fancied quite easy thus to sift it out — but it proved that while men were right in attributing this gift to Emerson,

Conce

Dear Sir,

I certainly
prepared to offer
a lecturer to
and hardly
grasped a moment
as a large one
I will represent
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Thoreau

Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, and Whittier, the critics were quite wrong in denying it to Thoreau, who was generally regarded as a mere reflection of Emerson. Mrs. Thoreau, the mother, thought with quite as much justice that it was Emerson who reflected her son ; but the weight of opinion was on the other side. Many could not understand why anybody should really wish Thoreau's letters to be published ; but the final publication of his journal is acknowledged to be an important literary event ; and it is probable that his fame will for some time increase ; and will thereafter safely hold its own. Thoreau died at forty-four, without having achieved fame or fortune. For years his life was commonly spoken of as a failure ; but it now proves, with all its drawbacks, to have been a great and eminent success. Even testing it only by the common appetite of authors for immortality, his seems already a sure and enviable place. Time is rapidly melting away the dross from his writings, and exhibiting their gold. But his standard was higher than the mere desire for fame, and he has told it plainly. "There is nowhere recorded," he complains, "a simple

and irrepressible satisfaction with the gift of life, any memorable praise of God. . . . If the day and night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance, like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, — is more elastic, starry, and more immortal, — that is your success.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOUTHERN INFLUENCE — WHITMAN

WE have had to speak, thus far, mainly of work done within three somewhat narrowly restricted areas, with their respective centres in or about Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Before the outbreak of the Civil War a distinct type of literary energy manifested itself in the South, with Charleston, S. C., as its principal centre. In earlier days the South was the region in which literature had its slowest development. Even then, however, it possessed a single writer who, representing the best type of Southern colonist, should be considered before we approach the work of the thoroughly Americanized Southerner. This writer was Colonel William Byrd of Westover, Va., whose very interesting papers have recently come to light. Byrd founded the city of Richmond, lived in lordly fashion, and had perhaps a larger library than any man in New

England, its catalogue including 3438 volumes. He was also a member of the king's council for thirty-seven years and finally its president. He was a patron of art and science and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Great Britain. Colonel Byrd was one of the commissioners to run the Virginia boundary through the Dismal Swamp in 1728, and he attended the actual surveyors half a mile into the then terrible Swamp. No New England writer at that day could possibly have written so cheery and jaunty a description of their struggle : —

“ The skirts of it were thinly planted with dwarf reeds and gall-bushes, but when we got into the Dismal itself, we found the reeds grew there much taller and closer, and to mend the matter were so interlaced with bamboo-briers, that there was no scuffling through them without the help of pioneers. At the same time, we found the ground moist and trembling under our feet like a quagmire, insomuch that it was an easy matter to run a ten foot pole to the head in it, without exerting any uncommon strength to do it. Two of the men, whose burdens were the least cumbersome, had orders to march before, with their tomahawks, and clear the way, in order to make an opening for the surveyors. By their assistance we made a shift to push the line half a mile in three hours, and then reached a small piece of firm land, about one hundred yards wide, standing up above the rest like an island. Here

the people were glad to lay down their loads and take a little refreshment, while the happy man whose lot it was to carry the jug of rum, began already, like Æsop's bread-carriers, to find it grow a good deal lighter.

"17th. . . . Since the surveyors had entered the Dismal they had laid eyes on no living creature ; neither bird nor beast, insect nor reptile came in view. Doubtless the eternal shade that broods over this mighty bog, and hinders the sunbeams from blessing the ground, makes it an uncomfortable habitation for anything that has life. Not so much as a Zealand frog could endure so aguish a situation. It had one beauty, however, that delighted the eye, though at the expense of all the other senses : the moisture of the soil preserves a continual verdure, and makes every plant an evergreen, but at the same time the foul damps ascend without ceasing, corrupt the air, and render it unfit for respiration. Not even a turkey buzzard will venture to fly over it, no more than the Italian vultures will over the filthy lake Avernus or the birds in the holy land over the salt sea where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood.

"In these sad circumstances the kindest thing we could do for our suffering friends was to give them a place in the Litany. Our chaplain for his part did his office, and rubbed us up with a seasonable sermon. This was quite a new thing to our brethren of North Carolina, who live in a climate where no clergyman can breathe, any more than spiders in Ireland."

It is impossible to read this and not recognize in every sentence the jaunty, man-of-the-worldly, almost patrician air with which this

cheery Englishman pursues his investigations, a tone so absolutely remote from that of any New England excursion into the wilderness; but North and South at that time never came in contact. A hundred years later — that is, sixty or seventy years ago — relations had begun to exist between the far-off regions — politically at Washington; socially in Philadelphia, where the Virginia ladies did their shopping; educationally in New England, whither the Southern boys came in shoals to the Harvard Law School under Judge Story, and whence tutors and governesses were sent, on very low pay, to teach the white children on the plantations. During my own college days, in 1841, I spent weeks on my uncle's plantation in northern Virginia, where he had married into a prominent Virginia family. The old life prevailed, but impoverished. The cotton planters farther south were still rich, but unceasing tobacco crops had exhausted the land; they had books also, but old, like the buildings, and they were mainly kept in the little office of the owner, with the door always open, night or day — whole sets of old English reviews and magazines in worn-out bindings, and hardly a book that had

been bought for a dozen years, so that the few new works by Longfellow and Dickens which I carried down were received as they might have been on a desolate island. Indeed, it seemed like an island race living there, with a sweet accent of its own.

The extreme slowness with which anything like original literature was developed in the South is pretty easily accounted for. Colonel Byrd represented a class of English gentlemen which had much to do with the making of the South socially and politically, but which could leave to its descendants only a somewhat limited intellectual inheritance. The isolated, aristocratic life of the Southern whites was founded upon conservatism. Up to the very middle of the nineteenth century their instinct led them to follow tradition in questions of culture and taste, as well as of manners. Unfortunately, good taste and achievement in art are far less likely to spring from conservatism and the aristocratic life than are good manners and skill in politics. The greater and better part of Southern literature has been produced since the Civil War.

There were, however, three or four antebellum writers who attempted to give liter-

any expression to the Southern life or the Southern spirit. The first of them in point of time was William Gilmore Simms. He was in some respects akin to Cooper ; a writer of robust temper, a talent for narrative, and an eye for the picturesque in Southern history. He was, however, even less a finished artist than Cooper, and not one of his many romances has gained a sure place in literature. His work as a whole affords an interesting picture, but not a great picture, of Southern life and manners.

Simms was born, and lived for most of his life, in Charleston, which was also the native city of the two poets, Hayne and Timrod. Timrod, who, apart from Lanier and Poe, are now best known among Southern poets. Paul Hamilton Hayne's poetry is neither markedly Southern nor markedly original. It has a certain smoothness and elegance, but lacks force. A few lines from *The Mocking Bird* may serve to illustrate both its merit and its limitations : —

“ A golden pallor of voluptuous light
 Filled the warm Southern night :
 The moon, clear orb'd, above the sylvan scene

Moved like a stately queen,
So rife with conscious beauty all the while,
What could she do but smile
At her own perfect loveliness below,
Glassed in the tranquil flow
Of crystal fountains and unruffled streams? ”

This is evidently the composition of a conscientious practitioner of English verse rather than the song of a poet who cannot help singing. The verse of Henry Timrod, Hayne's contemporary and friend, is far more rugged, more characteristic of the South, more personal. Even in descriptive passages there is a certain sweep and vigor which Hayne's style altogether lacks : —

“Through lands which look one sea of billowy gold
Broad rivers wind their devious ways;
A hundred isles in their embraces fold
A hundred luminous bays;
And through yon purple haze
Vast mountains lift their plumèd peaks cloud-
crowned.”

These lines are quoted from Timrod's best poem, *The Cotton Boll*, a rhapsody upon the South, which concludes with a characteristically stirring defiance of the North : —

“To thy will

Resigned, O Lord ! we cannot all forget
That there is much even Victory must regret.
And, therefore, not too long
From the great burthen of our country's wrong
Delay our just release !
And, if it may be, save
These sacred fields of peace
From stain of patriot or of hostile blood !
Oh, help us, Lord ! to roll the crimson flood
Back on its course, and, while our banners wing
Northward, strike with us ! till the Goth shall cling
To his own blasted altar-stones, and crave
Mercy ; and we shall grant it, and dictate
The lenient future of his fate
There, where some rotting ships and crumbling quays
Shall one day mark the port which ruled the western
seas.”

If this is not quite great poetry, it is undeniably strong poetry, and this, we remember, is all that can fairly be said of almost all the poetry which was produced, and applauded, in the North during the same period. Timrod and Hayne, like Simms, — who also produced some creditable verse, — shared the privations of the South after the war.

Of the two men whose names are most prominently associated with Southern literature, one had a Southern quality of mind rather than of political faith. In the case of Edgar

Allan Poe, nature tried the experiment of bringing extremes together. The outcome of the effort was a perplexing per-

Edgar
Allan Poe.

sonality, the object of a discussion, not to say dispute, which has never yet been adjusted. Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston Jan. 19, 1809, the child of two wandering actors, and was adopted on their death by a wealthy tobacco merchant of Richmond, Va. Though sent to school for a time in England, his training, habits, and tastes all belonged to the Virginia of that day, and with a reckless absence of all the qualities of social rectitude in other respects, he combined strangely enough a singular elevation of mind, a refinement amounting to purity, in all his relations with the other sex : a quality perhaps of more redeeming value than any other single virtue, both for the poet and for the man.

Edgar Allan Poe was, in fact, so far as his art was concerned, a dweller in a visionary land of his own ; in his life he was for the most part of the earth earthy. His place in purely imaginative prose-writing is as unquestionable as Hawthorne's. He even succeeded, as Hawthorne did not, in penetrating the artistic indifference of the French mind ;

and it was a substantial triumph, when we consider that Baudelaire put himself or his friends to the trouble of translating even the prolonged platitudes of *Eureka* and the wearisome narrative of *Arthur Gordon Pym*. Neither Poe nor Hawthorne has been fully recognized in England ; and yet no Englishman of their time, unless De Quincey, has done any prose imaginative work to be named with theirs. But in comparing Poe with Hawthorne, we see that the genius of the latter has hands and feet as well as wings, so that all his work is solid as masonry, while Poe's is broken and disfigured by all sorts of inequalities and imitations ; he did not disdain, for want of true integrity, to disguise and to falsify, and (I have myself seen proofs of this among the Griswold MSS.) to suggest or even prepare puffs of himself.

But, making all possible deductions, how wonderful remains the power of Poe's imaginative tales, and how immense is the ingenuity of his puzzles and disentanglements ! The conundrums of Wilkie Collins never renew their interest after the answer is known ; but Poe's can be read again and again. It is where spiritual depths are to be touched that

he shows his weakness ; his attempts at profundity are as unsuccessful as they are rare ; where there is the greatest display of philosophic form he is often most trivial, whereas Hawthorne is usually profoundest when he has disarmed you by his simplicity. The truth is, that Poe lavished on things comparatively superficial those great intellectual resources which Hawthorne reverently husbanded and used. That there is something behind even genius to make or mar it, this is the lesson of the two lives.

Poe makes one of his heroes define another as “ that *monstrum horrendum*, an unprincipled man of genius.” It is in the malice and fury of his critical work that his own low moral tone betrays itself. No atmosphere can be more belittling than that of his *New York Literati*: it is a mass of vehement dogmatism and petty personalities ; opinions warped by private feeling, and varying from page to page. He seemed to have absolutely no fixed standard of critical judgment. There was, indeed, little unbiased criticism anywhere in America during those acrimonious days, when the most honorable head might be covered with insult or neglect, while any young poet-

ess who smiled sweetly on Poe or Griswold or Willis might find herself placed among the Muses. Poe complimented and rather patronized Hawthorne, but found him only "peculiar and *not* original;" saying of him, "He has not half the material for the exclusiveness of literature that he has for its universality," whatever that may mean; and finally, he tried to make it appear that Hawthorne had borrowed from himself. He returned again and again to the attack on Longfellow as a willful plagiarist, denouncing the trivial resemblance between his *Midnight Mass for the Dying Year* and Tennyson's *Death of the Old Year*, as "belonging to the most barbarous class of literary piracy." To make this attack was, as he boasted, "to throttle the guilty;" and while dealing thus ferociously with Longfellow, thus condescendingly with Hawthorne, he was claiming a foremost rank among American authors for obscurities now forgotten, such as Mrs. Amelia B. Welby and Estelle Anne Lewis. No one ever did more than Poe to lower the tone of literary criticism in this country; and the greater his talent, the greater the mischief.

Poe's criticisms sprang from prejudice and the narrow logical faculty in which his intellect mainly consisted, while the poetry upon which his fame rests was the product of true creative power. That poetry is of small bulk and of smaller range. Most of it is based on neither deep thought, nor passionate feeling, nor spiritual insight. Its excellence is perhaps harder to account for than in the case of any other English poet. Even its sentimentalism is not quite of a kind to bring about the popularity of *The Bells* and *The Raven*, and even its melodiousness is hardly capable of explaining the hold which poems like *Israfel* maintain upon readers of the best poetry in all tongues.

The two most commonplace things that can be said about Poe's verse are, that it is "weird" and that it is "musical;" but perhaps they say pretty much all that need be said. The real merit in this poetry, the quality which makes it perfect in its kind, is so subtle as to elude definition. A little may be done by comparison: there are passages in Blake, in Beddoes, and, above all, in Coleridge, which seem to suggest Poe's habitual mood and tone. With what in English verse

so naturally as with *Kubla Khan* does the opening stanza of *Israfel* compare? —

“In heaven a spirit doth dwell
Whose heart-strings are a lute;
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.”

It is easy to say that there is nothing in this, any more than in those famous lines: —

“In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
In caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.”

And in truth there is nothing in them, nothing but beauty and wonder and magic.

It is in this glow of fancy alone that Poe seems in any real sense to represent the South. The fact of his New England birth does not account for this detachment; it is due rather to his absorption in his own fantastic life of the mind. Poe's career was a sad one, of which the events are too well known to need retailing here. He was a man to pity, rather than admire, the victim of irresponsibility, of impulse, of drink, of opium, — of himself,

in short. His best work was not, like that of the greatest, sanest creative spirits, the outcome of a strong and complete personality; it was reflected from the single clear facet which his nature could present to any ray.

It happens to us rarely in our lives to come consciously into the presence of that extraordinary miracle we call genius. Among American authors, Poe probably stood next to Hawthorne in the vividness of personal impression which he produced upon those who saw him. One may still recall his strange face, with its ample forehead, brilliant eyes, and narrowness of nose and chin; an ideal face, anything but coarse, yet with the look of over-sensitiveness which, when uncontrolled, may prove more debasing than coarseness. It was a face to rivet one's attention in any crowd, yet a face that no one would feel safe in loving. I remember the impression which he made upon the occasion of his first appearance in Boston.

After his introduction he stood with a sort of shrinking before the audience, and then began in a thin, tremulous, hardly musical voice, an apology for his poem, and a deprecation of the expected criticism of the Boston

public ; reiterating this in a sort of persistent, querulous way, which did not seem like satire, but impressed me at the time as nauseous flattery. It was not then generally known, nor was it established for a long time after, — even when he had himself asserted it, — that the poet was himself born in Boston ; and no one can now tell, perhaps, what was the real feeling behind the apparently sycophantic attitude. When, at the end, he abruptly began the recitation of his perplexing “Al Aaraaf,” everybody looked thoroughly mystified. The verses had long since been printed in his youthful volume, and had reappeared within a few days, if I mistake not, in Wiley & Putnam’s edition of his poems ; and they produced no very distinct impression on the audience until Poe began to read the maiden’s song in the second part. Already his tones had been softening to a finer melody than at first, and when he came to the verses : —

“Ligeia ! Ligeia !

My beautiful one !

Whose harshest idea

Will to melody run,

Oh ! is it thy will

On the breezes to toss ?

Or capriciously still,
Like the lone albatross,
Incumbent on night
(As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?"

his voice seemed attenuated to the faintest golden thread; the audience became hushed, and, as it were, breathless; there seemed no life in the hall but his; and every syllable was accentuated with such delicacy, and sustained with such sweetness, as I never heard equaled by other lips. When the lyric ended, it was like the ceasing of the gypsy's chant in Browning's *Flight of the Duchess*; and I remember nothing more, except that in walking back to Cambridge my comrades and I felt that we had been under the spell of some wizard. Indeed, I feel much the same in the retrospect, to this day.

We have treated Poe as representing the Southern mind, though he was born in Boston; but in reality the only Southern poet of leading quality was Sidney Lanier. Emerson said unjustly of Shelley, that although uniformly a poetic mind, he was never a poet. As to all the

Southern-born poets of this country except Lanier, even as to Hayne and Timrod, the question still remains whether they got actually beyond the poetic mind. In Ticknor's *Little Giffen* and Pinkney's *I Fill this Cup*, they did. In Lanier's case alone was the artistic work so continuous and systematic, subject to such self-imposed laws and tried by so high a standard, as to make it safe, in spite of his premature death, to place him among those whom we may without hesitation treat as "master-singers." Even among these, of course, there are grades; but as Lowell once said of Thoreau, "To be a master is to be a master." With Lanier, music and poetry were in the blood. Music was at any rate his first passion. As a boy he taught himself to play the flute, organ, piano, violin, guitar, and banjo; the first-named instrument was always his favorite, or, perhaps, that of his father, who "feared for him the powerful fascination of the violin." But his parents rather dreaded his absorption in music, apparently thinking with Dr. Johnson that musicians were "amusing vagabonds." The same thought caused a struggle in the boy's own mind, for he wrote

at eighteen that though he was conscious of having "an extraordinary musical talent," yet music seemed to him "so small a business in comparison with other things" which he might do, that he wished to forsake the art. It appears from the same note-book that he already felt himself called to a literary career. He was at that time a student at Oglethorpe College, a Presbyterian institution, now extinct, near Midway, Ga. Here he graduated at eighteen, with the first honors of his class, although he had lost a year during which he was a clerk in the post-office at Macon. Lanier became a tutor in the college on graduating, but left his post to enlist as a private in the Confederate army.

He enlisted in the Macon Volunteers of the Second Georgia Battalion, the first military force which left Georgia for the seat of war. He remained in the service during the whole war, and, though three times offered promotion, would never accept it, from a desire to remain near his younger brother, who was in the same regiment. He was in the battle of Seven Pines, that of Drewry's Bluffs, and the seven days of fighting about Richmond, Va., including Malvern Hill.

After this campaign he was transferred with his brother to the signal service, because, as envious companions said, he could play the flute. In 1863 his detachment was mounted ; and later each of the two brothers was detailed to take charge of a vessel which was to run the blockade. Sidney was captured and spent five months as a prisoner at Point Lookout. It was almost at the end of the war (Feb., 1865) that he was exchanged, and he returned home on foot, having only his flute and a twenty-dollar gold piece which had not been taken from him when his pockets were searched, on his capture. He reached home March 15, and was dangerously ill for six weeks, during which his mother died of the pulmonary disease which he had possibly inherited.

In 1873 he took up his abode in Baltimore, having made an engagement as first flute for the Peabody Symphony concerts. Here he resided for the rest of his life, engaged always in a threefold struggle for health, for bread, and for a literary career. To his father, who kept open for him a place in the law office at Macon, he wrote (Nov. 29, 1873) that, first, his chance for life was ten

times greater at Baltimore ; that, secondly, he could not consent to be a third-rate struggling lawyer for the rest of his life ; and that, in the third place, he had been assured by good judges that he was "the greatest flute player in the world," and had also every encouragement for success in literature. As a result, he stayed, breaking down at short intervals, but playing in the orchestra winter after winter, — writing, lecturing, teaching. He studied laboriously, as his books bear witness. He had a theory of verse. It seems ingenious, suggestive, and overstrained, but it is easy to believe that to one who takes it on the middle ground where Lanier dwelt, halfway between verse and music, it might seem conclusive.

Most of us associate its fundamental proposition with the poet Coleridge, who, in his *Christabel*, announced it as a new principle in English verse that one should count by accents, not by syllables. This bold assertion, which plainly marked the transition from the measured strains of Dryden and Pope to the free modern rhythm, was true in the sense in which Coleridge probably meant it ; nor does it seem likely that Coleridge overlooked

what Lanier points out, — that all our nursery rhymes and folk-songs are written on the same principle. There is certainly nothing more interesting in Lanier's book than the passage in which he shows that, just as a Southern negro will improvise on the banjo daring variations, such as would, if Haydn employed them, be called high art, so Shakespeare often employed the simplest devices of sound such as are familiar in nursery songs, and thus produced effects which are metrically indistinguishable from those of Mother Goose.

Lanier was a critic of the best kind, for his criticism is such as a sculptor receives from a brother sculptor, not such as he gets from the purchaser on one side or the marble-worker on the other. What can be more admirable than his saying of Swinburne, "He invited me to eat; the service was silver and gold, but no food therein save pepper and salt;" or of William Morris, "He caught a crystal cupful of yellow light of sunset, and persuading himself to deem it wine, drank it with a sort of smile." Among the fullest and most suggestive of these criticisms is his estimate of Whitman.

Whitman represented to Lanier a literary spirit alien to his own. There could be little in common between the fleshliness of *Leaves of Grass* and the refined chivalry that could write in *The Symphony* lines like these : —

“ Shall ne’er prevail the woman’s plea,
We maids would far, far whiter be,
If that our eyes might sometimes see
Men maids in purity ? ”

In Lanier’s lectures before Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore upon *The English Novel and its Development* he has much to say upon what may be called the anti-kid-glove literature, a product which is really no better than the kid-glove literature, at which it affects to protest. Lanier quotes the lines of Whitman, “ Fear grace, fear elegance, civilization, *délicatesse*,” and again the passage in which the same poet rejoices in America because “ here are the roughs, beards, . . . combativeness, and the like ; ” and Lanier shows how far were the founders of the Republic — Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams — from this theory that there can be no manhood in decent clothes or well-bred manners. He justly complains that this rougher school has really as much dandyism

about it as the other — “the dandyism of the roustabouts,” he calls it; that it poses and attitudinizes and “is the extreme of sophistication in writing.” “If we must have dandyism in our art,” he adds, “surely the softer sort, which at least leans towards decorum and gentility, is preferable.” Then, going beyond literature to the foundation of government, he quotes the ancient Epictetus against this modern school, and asserts that true manhood has no necessary connection with physical health or strength, and that the true athlete is he who is ruler over himself.

Lanier complains of this type of democracy — the merely brawny and sinewy — “that it has no provision for sick, or small, or puny, or plain-featured, or hump-backed, or any deformed people,” and that is really “the worst kind of aristocracy, being an aristocracy of nature’s favorites in the matter of muscle.” Then he describes some weak-eyed young man in a counting-room toiling to support his mother, or send his brother to school, and contrasts him with this physical ideal. “His chest is not huge, his legs are inclined to be pipe-stems, and his dress is like that of

any other bookkeeper. Yet the weak-eyed, pipe-stem-legged young man impresses us as more of a man, more of a democratic man, than the tallest of Whitman's roughs; to the eye of the spirit there is more strength in this man's daily endurance of petty care and small weariness for love, more of the sort which makes a real democracy and a sound republic, than in an army of Whitman's unshaven loafers." This came, be it remembered, from a man who fought through the seven days of fighting before Richmond; who had "given his proofs," as people used to say in the old days of dueling.

We have followed out this line of thought about Whitman, not merely for its own sake, but because it probably draws Lanier into sharper expression and more characteristic statement than are to be found anywhere else in his works. That he could criticise profoundly one much nearer to himself than Whitman is plain when Lanier comes to speak of Shelley, of whom he has a sentence that seems to be another shot in the bull's-eye of the target. He says: —

"In truth, Shelley appears always to have labored under an essential immaturity; it is very possible that

if he had lived a hundred years he would never have become a man ; he was penetrated with modern ideas, but penetrated as a boy would be ; crudely, overmuch, and with a constant tendency to the extravagant and illogical, — so I call him the Modern Boy.”

It remains to be said that in Lanier’s poetry we find the working out of these ideas, but according to the free faith which he held. There is uniformly a wonderful beat and cadence in his poems, — a line of a dozen syllables mating with a line of a single syllable in as satisfactory a movement as can be found in his favorite Mother Goose or in the “ patting Juba ” of a plantation singer. The volume of his poetry is less than that of Hayne, but its wealth and depth are greater. Having spent so much of his life in playing the flute in an orchestra, he has also an ear for the distribution of instruments, and this gives him a desire for the antiphonal, for introducing an answer, or an echo, or a compensating note. In the poems that most arrest attention, — as the *Cantata* at the opening of the Philadelphia Exposition, — this characteristic was so developed as to give an effect of exaggeration and almost of grotesqueness, which was, however, so relieved by the music that

the impression soon passed away. But into his description of sunrise in the first of his *Hymns of the Marshes*, he puts not merely such a wealth of outdoor observation as makes even Thoreau seem thin and arid, but combines with it a roll and range of rhythm such as Lowell's *Commemoration Ode* cannot equal, and only some of Browning's early ocean cadences can surpass. There are inequalities in the poem, little spasmodic phrases here and there, or fancies pressed too hard, — he wrote it, poor fellow, when far gone in his last illness, with his pulse at one hundred and four degrees, and then unable to raise his food to his mouth, — but much the same is true of Keats's great fragments, and there are lines and phrases of Lanier's that are not excelled in *Endymion*, and perhaps not in *Hyperion*.

A passage from those "hymns" must be quoted. It is called simply *Dawn*: —

"But no; it is made; list! somewhere, — mystery,
where?

In the leaves? in the air?

In my heart? is a motion made;

'T is a motion of dawn, like a flicker of shade on shade.

In the leaves 't is palpable; low multitudinous stirring

Upwinds through the woods; the little ones, softly
conferring,

Have settled my lord's to be looked for; so, they are
still;

But the air and my heart and the earth are a-thrill, —
And look where the wild duck sails round the bend of
the river, —

And look where a passionate shiver

Expectant is bending the blades

Of the marsh-grass in serial shimmers and shades, —

And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast fleeting,

Are beating

The dark overhead as my heart beats, — and steady
and free

Is the ebb-tide flowing from marsh to sea —

(Run home, little streams,

With your lapfuls of stars and dreams), —

And a sailor unseen is hoisting a-peak,

For, list, down the inshore curve of the creek

How merrily flutters the sail, —

And lo, in the East! Will the East unveil?

The East is unveiled, the East hath confessed

A flush: 't is dead; 't is alive; 't is dead, ere the West

Was aware of it; nay, 't is abiding, 't is unwithdrawn;

Have a care, sweet Heaven! 'T is Dawn."

All that Lanier did afforded but a glimpse of what he might have done, had health and time been given him, but these were not given, and his literary monument remains unfinished. He died of consumption at Baltimore, at the age of thirty-nine, Sept 7, 1881, leaving a wife and four boys. His

work will long live as that of the Sir Galahad among our American poets.

We may, perhaps, include here what is to be said of Whitman, not so much because he lived for a time in the South, ^{Walt} as because Lanier's criticisms thus ^{Whitman.} bring him freshly to mind. He was, indeed, a person and a poet singularly detached from place. He lived in New York, in New Orleans, in Washington, and was always ready to take the road for a new experience. He was carpenter, printer, editor, government clerk. Perhaps it was from his early years in the neighborhood of New York city, just then beginning to outgrow its provincial character, that his first inspiration was drawn. Several of his poems record the delight with which the manifold restless forces of life in the new metropolis affected him, and the fondness which grew in him for all sorts and conditions of men as he saw them upon the wharves and streets of New York.

In the stricter sense of the critics, Whitman may not be called a poet. There seems to be a provision in nature for a class who appear at long intervals, who become known as poets,

and yet who resolutely confine themselves to a few very simple stage properties, and substitute mere cadence for form. There was for many years an Ossianic period, when simple enthusiasts sat up at night and read until they were sleepy about the waving of the long grass on the blasted heath, and the passing of the armed warrior and the white-bosomed maiden. Ossian is not so much read now, but Napoleon Bonaparte admired him and Goethe studied him. Neither is Tupper now much cultivated ; but I remember when his long rambling lines were copied by the page into many extract books, and that he too was welcomed as relieving mankind from the tiresome restraints of verse. It would be a great mistake, doubtless, to class Whitman with Ossian on the one side, — though he names him with Shakespeare among the writers whom he studied in youth, — or Tupper on the other ; but it would be a still greater error to overlook the fact that the mere revolt against the tyranny of form has been made again and again before him, and without securing immortal fame to the author of the experiment.

It is no uncommon thing, moreover, for

the fiercest innovating poets to revert to the ranks of order before they die. Whitman abstained, through all his later publications, from those proclamations of utter nudity to which Emerson objected, and omitted some of the most objectionable instances of it from later editions ; and was also far more compressed and less simply enumerative than when he began. True poetry is not merely the putting of thoughts into words, but the putting of the best thoughts into the best words ; it secures for us what Ruskin calls "the perfection and precision of the instantaneous line." It fires a rifle-bullet instead of a shower of bird-shot ; it culls the very best phrase out of language, instead of throwing a dozen epithets to see if one may chance to stick. For example, Emerson centres his *Problem* in "a cowed church-man ;" Browning singles out an individual Bishop Blougram or Rabbi Ben Ezra, as the case may be ; but Whitman enumerates "priests on the earth, oracles, sacrificers, brahmins, sabians, lamas, monks, muftis, exhorters." In *The Song of the Broad-Axe* there are nineteen successive lines beginning with the word "where ;" in *Salut au Monde* eighteen in succession begin with

"I see." In *I Sing the Body Electric* he specifies in detail "wrists and wrist-joints, hand, palm, knuckles, thumb, forefinger, finger-joints, finger-nails," with thirteen more lines of just such minutiae. In the same poem he explains that he wishes his verses to be regarded as "man's, woman's, child's, youth's, wife's, husband's, mother's, father's, young man's, young woman's poems." This is like bringing home a sackful of pebbles from the beach and asking us to admire the collected heap as a fine sea view. But it is to be noticed that these follies diminish in his later works: the lines grow shorter; and though he does not acquiesce in rhyme, he occasionally accepts a rhythm so well defined that it may be called conventional, as in the fine verses entitled *Darest thou now, O soul?* And it is a fact which absolutely overthrows the whole theory of poetic structure or structurelessness implied in Whitman's volumes, that his warmest admirers usually place first among his works the poem on Lincoln's death, *My Captain*, which comes so near to recognized poetic methods that it falls naturally into rhyme.

Whitman can never be classed as Spinoza was by Schleiermacher, among "God-intoxi-

cated" men; but he was early inebriated with two potent draughts — himself and his country : —

"One's self I sing, a simple separate poem,

Yet utter the word Democratic, the word *En Masse*."

With these words, two of them French, his collected poems open, and to these he has always been true. They have brought with them a certain access of power, and they have also implied weakness. We cannot attribute final and complete acceptance to any poet in whom the emotion of high and ideal love between the sexes has no visible place. When Thoreau says of Whitman, "He does not celebrate love at all; it is as if the beasts spoke,"¹ the verdict seems to be final. Not only has he given us no love poem, in the ordinary use of the term, but it is as hard to conceive of his writing one as of his chanting a serenade beneath the window of his mistress. This not only separates him from the poets of thoroughly ideal emotion like Poe, but from those, like Rossetti, whose passion, though it may incarnate itself in the body, has its sources in the soul.

¹ *Letters*, p. 345.

As time went on, this less pleasing aspect became softened; his antagonisms were disarmed by applauses; although this recognition sometimes took a form so extreme and adulatory that it obstructed his path to that simple and unconscious life which he always preached but could not quite be said to practice. His career purified itself, as many careers do, in the alembic of years, and up to the time of his death (March 26, 1892) he gained constantly in friends and in readers. Intellectually speaking, all critics now admit that he shows in an eminent degree that form of the ideal faculty which Emerson conceded to Margaret Fuller—he has “lyric glimpses.” Rarely constructing anything, he is yet singularly gifted in phrases, in single cadences, in casual wayward strains as from an Æolian harp. It frequently happens that the titles or catch-words of his poems are better than the poems themselves, as we sometimes hear it said in just praise of a clergyman that he has beautiful texts. “Proud Music of the Storm,” “When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloomed,” and others, will readily occur to memory. Often, on the other hand, they are inflated, as “Chanting the Square

Deific," or affected and feeble, as "Eidolons." One of the most curiously un-American traits in a poet professedly so patriotic is his way of employing foreign, and especially French words, to a degree that recalls the fashionable novels of the last generation, and gives an incongruous effect comparable only to Theodore Parker's description of an African chief seen by some one at Sierra Leone: "With the exception of a dress-coat, his Majesty was as naked as a pestle."

Of all our poets, he is really the least simple, the most meretricious; and this is the reason why the honest consciousness of the classes which he most celebrates — the drover, the teamster, the soldier — has never been reached by his songs. He talks of labor as one who had never really labored; his *Drum Taps* proceed from one who has never personally responded to the tap of the drum. He has something of the turgid wealth, the rather self-conscious amplitude, of Victor Hugo, and much of his broad, vague, indolent desire for the welfare of the whole human race; but he has none of Hugo's structural power, his dramatic or at least melodramatic instinct, and his occasionally terse and brilliant con-

densation. He sometimes suggests a young man of rather ideal stamp who used to invite Mr. Emerson and others to give readings at his room in Boston, many years ago. He was an ardent disciple of Fourier, and had painted on his door in large golden letters the motto of Fourier, "Universal Unity," with beams of starlight diverging from it in all directions. Below this was the motto, hung separately and painted in neat black and white, "Please wipe your feet." Unfortunately, Whitman himself, with all his genius, was not quite careful enough to provide the foot-mat.

CHAPTER IX

THE WESTERN INFLUENCE

It is not a great many years since the mere suggestion of any Western achievement in literature would have called out such anecdotes as belonged to the time when Senator Blackburn and Colonel Pepper of whiskey-making fame are said to have been talking about horses at Washington ; and Representative Crane of Texas asked them, " Why do you not talk of something else ? Of literature, for instance, to improve your minds ? I like poets," he said, " especially Emerson and Longfellow." " Longfellow ? " interrupted Colonel Pepper ; " oh, yes, I know Longfellow ; he is the best horse ever raised in Kentucky." That was the point from which Western literature started ; and its progress has been so recent that it is not possible, as it has been in our studies hitherto, to appeal to the verdict of time. Most of that progress, indeed, has been made during the past twenty years.

Of the few voices which commanded marked attention before that time, Bret Harte went West from Albany before he came East again and left American shores forever. Mark Twain and Mr. Howells were born east of the Missouri, which comes nearer than anything else to being the middle dividing line between the Eastern and Western halves of the continent. It was not many years ago that one of the most highly educated of Americans asserted positively that this nation could never have a great literature because no people had ever possessed one unless living within easy reach of the ocean. Time has shown that a vast inland country has also its resources and its stimulus ; as, indeed, Cooper long ago indicated by naming one of his earliest novels *The Prairie*. Such a field must of course develop physically before it develops intellectually ; and commonly artistic development comes later still. Only a century ago three fourths of the continent was a trackless wilderness ; yet its recent development has been so rapid that it is hard for us actually to realize what that utter vacancy of human life meant to those who first had experience of it.

It is not yet fifty years since an Eastern traveler who had ventured as far as Kentucky brought back this tale of the early solitude there as it had An Empty Continent. been fifty years before that time. The first explorer, Daniel Boone, he told us, who died in 1820, used to travel absolutely alone for weeks together in the Kentucky forests with only his rifle for company. He could not take even a dog for fear of the Indians; and once he had to travel a hundred miles on a single meal. There were springs in the Licking Valley where twenty thousand buffaloes came and went, and whole Indian tribes followed their tracks. The Indians never once even saw Boone, for they did not suspect that any white man could be there; and he avoided their tracks and never saw them. After a while, there was another white explorer, Simon Kenton, whose coming into that region was unknown to Boone. They had approached the valley from opposite directions; each recognized by signs that there was a human being somewhere near, but out of sight. Then began long hours of noiseless manœuvres on each side, spying, evading, listening, concealing, climbing, burrowing, each trying

to find out without self-betrayal who or of what race this stranger was ; and such was their skill in concealment that it was forty-eight hours before either of them found out that the other was not an Indian or an enemy.

Fancy this loneliness, terrific and almost sublime, in the very heart of the continent, nay, far east of that, — for Kentucky itself is barely a quarter way across it. Consider that this was but little more than a century ago, and then think of that vast continent now settled, cultivated, organized, schooled, first divided into territories, then into states, counties, towns, villages, all filled with people who can read and write and look to the philanthropist for a public library. The superintendent of the census in 1890 announced officially that there was no longer any frontier line in the population map. The continent has been crossed, the first rough conquest of the wilderness has been accomplished. This is the region to which we are now to look for authors. All the great literary territories on the continent of Europe, Italy, Germany, France, Austro-Hungary, could be laid together in a small portion of it. The mere

size of a country is not a criterion of its productiveness in art, but it is reasonable to suppose that some of the vast energy hitherto employed in the task of opening the West will presently be spared from the toil of practical life, to give a good account of itself in literature.

The first authors who came from the West to delight our young people at the East were Audubon, the ornithologist, who had a way of interspersing between his bird sketches certain intermediate chapters called *Episodes*, usually personal narratives in the woods, beginning in 1831 — and Timothy Flint, who wrote *Ten Years in the Valley of the Mississippi* (1826), and also who wrote from Cincinnati to the London *Athenæum* and had his books translated into French. These books, with those of Peter Parley (sometimes written by Hawthorne), gave a most vivid charm to the Western wilds and rivers.

Early
Writers
about the
West.

In *The Pioneers* Cooper made us already conscious citizens of a great nation, and took our imagination as far as the Mississippi. Lewis and Clark carried us beyond the Mississippi (1814). About 1835 Oregon expe-

ditions were forming, and I remember when boys in New England used to peep through barn doors to admire the great wagons in which the emigrants were to travel. Then came Mrs. Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* (1839). Besides this we had Irving's *Tour of the Prairies* (1835) and his *Astoria* the following year. The West was still a word for vast expeditions, for the picturesque and the uncertainty of Indian life, and not for the amenities of a civilized condition. Aspirants for literary fame were not long lacking, to be sure, but as most of their work was based upon reading rather than experience, it had nothing characteristically Western about it. Most of them turned instinctively, ere long, to the Atlantic coast for sympathy and bookstores, as the Atlantic states had looked to Europe.

I shall always remember with satisfaction the delight with which Elizabeth Whittier, the poet's far more brilliant and vivacious sister, used to tell the tale of how their mother was once called to their modest front door, about 1850, by two plump and lively maidens who inquired for her son. They were told that he was not at home. They

cheerfully announced that they would come in and wait for him; and on being told that he was in Boston and might not return that day, they said that it was of no manner of consequence; they had just arrived from Ohio, were themselves authors, and would come in and remain until he got back. So they came in and waited, and proved to be Alice and Phœbe Cary. They were brought up in an Ohio cabin, had no candles to read by, and so read in the evening by lighted rags in a saucer of lard. Their only books were the *Bible*, *The History of the Jews*, *Charlotte Temple*, and a novel called *The Black Penitents*, with the cover gone and the last page all lost, so they never knew what became of the penitents, or whether the people who tore the precious book to pieces had also repented. Their published poems were full of dirges and despair, but they were the merriest of visitors, perfectly at home, and, as the poet luckily returned the next day, they stayed as long as they pleased and filled the house with fun.

It is only indirectly, as we have shown, that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* can be classed as a product of the West. It was written in the

East by an Eastern woman, though the materials were collected during a residence of nearly twenty years in the middle West.

The first definite intellectual product of the Great West was a swarm of "humorists," The political and otherwise, who were "Humorists." let loose over the land to set it laughing, sometimes in a good cause, sometimes in a bad one.

Nothing used to strike an American more, on his first visit to England thirty years ago, than the frequent discussion of American authors who were rarely quoted at home, except in stump-speeches, whose works had no place as yet in our literary collections, but who were still taken seriously among educated persons in England. The astonishment increased when he found the almanacs of "Josh Billings" reprinted in "Libraries of American Humor," and given an equal place with the writings of Holmes and Lowell. Finally he may have been driven to the extreme conclusion that there must be very little humor in England, where things were seriously published in book form, which here would never get beyond the corner of a newspaper. He found that the whole department

of American humor was created, so to speak, by the amazed curiosity of Englishmen. It was a phrase then rarely heard in the United States; and if we had such a thing among us, although it might cling to our garments, we were habitually as unconscious of it as are smokers of the perfume of their favorite weed. We have accepted the phrase now, and have consented to take a modest sort of pride in possessing "the American humorist." This means that we are now content to let the reputation of our humor stand or fall by the quality of the American joke.

So far as pure humor is concerned, there has never been a distinct boundary line between England and America. Nor can we say that what is called American humor belongs distinctively to the West. The early "humorists" were mostly of Eastern origin, though bred and emancipated in the West—thus Artemus Ward was from Maine, Josh Billings from Massachusetts, and Orpheus C. Kerr and Eli Perkins from New York. The prince among these jokers was Ar-
temus Ward, who as a lecturer
glided noiselessly upon the stage as if dressed for Hamlet, and looked as surprised as Ham-

let if the audience laughed. The stage was dark, and the performance was interrupted by himself at intervals, to look for an imaginary pianist and singer who never came, but who became as real to the audience as Jefferson's imaginary dog Schneider in *Rip Van Winkle*, for whom he was always vainly whistling. This unseen singer, we were told, would thrill every heart with his song, "Is it Raining, Mother Dear, in South Boston?" or, "Mother, You are One of My Parents," and could, we were assured, "extract a fiver from the pocket of the hardest-hearted man in the audience." This was the kind of platform humor which captured two continents, and substituted for the saying of M. Philarrète Chasles in 1851: "All America has not produced a humorist," the still more dangerous assumption that America produced nothing else.

The European popularity of this "American humor" was in part based, no doubt, upon the natural feeling of foreigners that something new is to be demanded of a new country, and this novelty is more naturally looked for, by the mass of readers, in costumes and externals than in the inward spirit.

Much of the welcome was given most readily to what may be called the Buffalo Bill spirit, and belonged to the tomahawk and blanket period. When a Swedish visitor to this country, some twenty years ago, was asked whether Frederika Bremer's novels, once received here with such enthusiasm, were still read in Sweden, he said "No;" and to the question as to what had taken their place he replied, "Bret Harte and Mark Twain." It is undoubtedly these two men rather than any others among the Western humorists, in their opinion of whom Europe and America, for a time at least, most nearly united.

Apart from his characterization of such broadly humorous types as "Truthful James" and "Ah Sin," Bret Harte deserves to be remembered as the picturesque Bret Harte. chronicler of life in California during the early gold-hunting days. His later work leads one to think that it was a lucky stroke of fortune which led the young native of New York with the quick eye and the clever pen, at precisely the right moment, into an uncultivated field. It was his lot, as was said by some critic, to remain for thirty years what is called a promising writer. He created,

at the very outset, four or five well-marked characters, and afterward published some thirty-six volumes without adding another. While his work was of narrow range, however, it belonged, at its best, to a respectable order of romantic fiction. It is not a little triumph to have created even four or five types of character, or to have produced three or four strong pieces of invention. Not much more, certainly, could have been expected of a writer who not long after his first success left the West, and, somewhat later, America, never to return. Such voluntary denationalization has been not uncommon among American writers. The most striking among recent instances is that of Henry James, a man of great powers, but of a well-nigh fatal instinct for super-refinement in life and art. So subtle and detached is his later method, that it has been said of him, not unfairly, "Even his cosmopolitanism has its limitations; to be truly cosmopolitan a man must be at home even in his own country."

Over-refinement is not the fault with which Mark Twain can ever be accused; his reckless robustness, indeed, constitutes his main

strength. I myself was first introduced to Mark Twain's books in 1872 by an unimpeachable English authority — on Mark a somewhat different line from Mr. Twain.

Clemens, — namely, Charles Darwin. "What!" he said to me, "you have never read Mark Twain? I always keep his *Jumping Frog* on a chair by my bedside that I may turn to it in case of sleeplessness!" and however doubtful this form of compliment may appear, it was certainly something that it cheered the wakeful hours of so great a brain. It is not to be admitted, however, that Englishmen have ever been very discriminating critics of Mark Twain. As they have never demanded of him high literary qualities, they have never felt his occasional want of them nor been especially interested when he developed them. He has been to them like those absolutely recognized wits who fill a table with laughter or delight whenever they happen to ask for a bit of bread. That Mark Twain is one of the really great jesters of the world is doubted by no one; but it may be that he will be like many others of that class whose works stand in libraries, whose volumes open easily at one or two often-read pages, while

the rest of the well-bound volumes are left unopened. Yet one thing is certain. In what has been well called "the Odyssean story of the Mississippi" under the name of *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain did something toward laying the foundation of an original Western literature. The whole local atmosphere, the tragic vividness with which heroic figures appear before us, rustic, even boyish, alive for a few hours, then disappearing with the same quiet abruptness in death; a whole family made interesting, even charming, to us, then vanishing mercilessly in a meaningless border feud: this is a distinct step forward in American literature, and cannot be put out of sight either by too ambitious efforts like his *Joan of Arc* or by free and easy journalistic extravaganzas like *Innocents Abroad*.

The first Western writer really recognized as taking the position of a literary leader at W. D. How- the East was, of course, Mr. Howells, ells. who came East in 1860 and has always remained. The peculiar charm of Howells's prose style has, doubtless, had its effect in disarming criticism. He rarely fails to give pleasure by the mere process of writing, and

this is much, to begin with ; just as, when we are listening to conversation, a musical voice gratifies us almost more than wit or wisdom. Mr. Howells is without an equal among his English-speaking contemporaries as to some of the most attractive literary graces. Unless it be in Mr. James, he has no rival for half-tints, for modulations, for subtle phrases that touch the edge of an assertion and yet stop short of it. He is like a skater who executes a hundred graceful curves within the limits of a pool a few yards square. Miss Austen, the novelist, once described her art as a little bit of ivory, on which she produced small effect after much labor. She underrated her own skill, as the comparison in some respects underrates that of Howells ; but his field is the little bit of ivory.

This is attributing to him only what he has been careful to claim for himself. He describes his methods very frankly, and his first literary principle has been to look away from great passions, and to elevate the commonplace instead by minute touches. Not only does he prefer this, but he does not hesitate to tell us sometimes, half jestingly, that it is the only thing to do. He says, " As in litera-

ture the true artist will shun the use of even real events if they are of an improbable character, so the sincere observer of man will not desire to look upon his heroic or occasional phases, but will seek him in his habitual moods of vacancy and tiresomeness." He may not mean to lay this down as a canon of universal authority, but he accepts it himself ; and is apt to state his own views too much as the decision of a court. He accepts it with the risk involved of a too-limited and microscopic range. That he has fully escaped this peril is due to the fact that his method went, after all, deeper than he admitted : he was not merely a good-natured observer, like Geoffrey Crayon, Gentleman, but he had theories and purposes, something to protest against, and something to assert.

He is often classed with Mr. James as representing the international school of novelists ; yet in reality they belong to widely different subdivisions. After all, Mr. James has permanently set up his easel in Europe, Mr. Howells in America ; and the latter has been, from the beginning, far less anxious to compare Americans with Europeans than with one another. He is international only

if we adopt Mr. Emerson's saying that Europe stretches to the Alleghanies. As a native of Ohio, transplanted to Massachusetts, he never can forego the interest implied in this double point of view. The Europeanized American, and, if we may so say, the Americanized American, are the typical figures that re-appear in his books. Even in *The Lady of the Aroostook*, although the voyagers reach the other side at last, the real contrast is found on board ship ; and, although he allows his heroine to have been reared in a New England village, he cannot forego the satisfaction of having given her California for a birthplace. Mr. James writes "international episodes" : Mr. Howells writes inter-oceanic episodes ; his best scenes imply a dialogue between the Atlantic and Pacific slopes.

In one sense the novels of Mr. Howells have, like those of many other writers of Western origin, proved a disappointment. Instead of bringing with them a largeness, as of the prairies, the genius finally developed has been that of the miniature artist. One must step back a century and read what Hazlitt wrote of *Clarissa Harlowe* to find the precise criticism for such work. "Clarissa,

says Hazlitt, "is too interesting by half. She is interesting in her ruffles, in her gloves, her samplers, her aunts and uncles. She is interesting in all that is uninteresting."¹ It is not unusual to find such superfine developments of art attempted in rough, new countries; but they cannot be said to represent the life of which they may be, by reaction, the outcome. There have been of late decided manifestations of an instinct toward the direct expression of the Western spirit.

In looking at the recent Western contributions altogether, however, we perceive one marked feature they have in common with the Eastern. The labors of many authors, in all parts of our vast country, are gradually putting on record a wide range of local types. As a rule, to be sure, it is the less educated classes which are more easily drawn, though these may not necessarily or always be the best worth drawing. Hence we are acquiring a most valuable gallery of more or less rustic groups spread over the continent, while the traditions of polish and refinement are ignored for want either of personal experience or of

¹ Hazlitt's *Lectures on English Poets*.

skill. Unluckily, the writer who has succeeded with village life always wishes to deal with more artificial society. It is as inevitable as the yearning of every clever amateur comedian to act Hamlet. Bret Harte and many of his successors handle admirably the types they knew in early life, but the moment they attempt to delineate a highly-bred woman the curtain rises on a creaking doll in starched petticoats. Few, indeed, of our early Western authors could venture to portray, what would seem not so impossible, an everyday gentleman or lady. For the East, on the other hand, Miss Jewett has been able to produce types of the old New England gentry, dwelling perhaps in the quietest of country towns, yet incapable of any act which is not dignified or gracious; and Miss Viola Roseboro has depicted such figures as that of the old Southern lady, living in a cheap New York boarding-house, toiling her life away to pay her brother's or her father's debts, and yet so exquisite in all her ways that the very page which describes her seems to exhale a delicate odor as of faded jasmine.¹

But Western literature is assuming an aspect

¹ See *Book and Heart*.

of larger development than any mere interpretation of the local type. The wondrous "transitory city" created by the Chicago Exposition made an era in Western life, and in the standing of that region before the world. For the first time, we all asked ourselves, not "Is this the wild West?" but "Is not this America?" and from that moment, it would seem, the West began to find direct expression in literature. Howells can never represent it; he came East too soon and too reverentially. But we find it in a book like *Main-Travelled Roads* by Hamlin Garland, where the vigor of characterization carries one away from the first moment to the last, and the figures seem absolutely real. Mr. Garland's pictures of life in the middle West are sombre, but not morbid. In one respect his work and that of Frank Norris present an odd paradox. Each of these writers set out with the stated intention of breaking away from the literary traditions of the East. They did, so far as the Eastern states of North America are concerned; but they did not hesitate to go still farther east, to France and Russia, for their models. Mr. Garland's earlier tales have much of the ironical com-

pactness of de Maupassant, and Mr. Norris's novels could not have been written but by a worshiper of Zola. It cannot be expected that the spirit of the West will find perfect expression under such a method. If America cannot find utterance in terms of England, she certainly cannot in terms of France. There are certain racial prescriptions of taste and style which cannot be safely ignored. Apart from the question of method, the substance of Mr. Norris's books is of exceptional power, and his early death deprived not only the West, but the whole country, of one who promised more even than he had accomplished. Mr. Norris's last story, *The Pit*, dealt with Chicago as a great financial centre. The work of Mr. H. B. Fuller has had to do rather with its civic and social life; *The Cliff-Dwellers* is the most striking of his stories, and bids fair to stand as the best analysis of the life of the "sky-scraper" and the department store, that is, the life of the ordinary prosperous dweller in a great American city.

How trifling may seem the total amount of this literary exhibit beside the gigantic enterprises, the daring achievements, the

great inventions which make the chronicle of the vast interior ! An Easterner traveling in the West may well be amazed, not at any ostentation of vanity on the part of Western hosts, but at their wonderful humility over an achievement so vast as the material conquest of a continent. How easily all else must seem to them secondary ; so that it may look like a trivial matter, as the Western editor said, to “make culture hum.” But when we turn our eyes backward, we see that in all nations the laurels of literature have endured beyond these external displays of power. They outlive cities, state-houses and statesmen. One may quote those fine lines of the once famous poem, *Festus* : —

“Homer is gone, and where is Troy and where
The rival cities seven ? His song outlasts
Town, tower and god, all that then was, save Heaven.”

It may be that Mr. Norris’s book will live when the tremendous operations of the wheat pit are forgotten ; or if not that book, some other. Life is more important than art, but art is its noblest record.

CHAPTER X

FORECAST

IN preparing the foregoing narrative, the attempt has been made from the outset to concentrate attention upon the few prominent writers and forces which have determined the development of American letters. It may be that some names have been wrongly subordinated or ignored ; but the critic must, after all, discriminate according to his own judgment. There is a wise old Persian saying, " They came to shoe the Pasha's horses, and the beetle stretched out his leg to be shod." The fundamental difficulty for fallible critics is to determine which is the Pasha's horse and which is the beetle.

Even in dealing with the past, it is possible to go hopelessly wrong in one's judgment of individuals, books or writers. For instance, Addison still stands, traditionally, at the head of English prose writers, in respect to style ; but from

The Fallibility of Criticism.

his account of the greatest English poets he omits the names of Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, Webster and Marlowe ; a tolerably correct list of the leading dramatic poets in the English tongue. One might almost say that he wrote his list through time's telescope reversed. In the same way Ruskin rules out from his list of English poets Shelley and Coleridge. One might hope that the good taste or vanity of the great poets themselves would restore the balance of their own fame, at least, but Tennyson wrote in his later years, " I feel as if my life had been a useless life ; " and Longfellow said, a few years before his death, to a young author who shrank from seeing his name in print, that he himself had never got over that feeling.

" Would it please you very much," asks Thackeray's Warrington of Pendennis, " to have been the author of Hayley's verses ? " Yet Hayley was, in his day, as Southey testifies, " by popular election the king of the English poets ; " and he was held so important a personage that he received, what probably no other author ever has won, a large income for the last twelve years of his life

in return for the prospective copyright of his posthumous memoirs. Miss Anna Seward, writing to Sir Walter Scott in 1786, ranks him and the equally forgotten Mason as "the two foremost poets of the day;" she calls Hayley's poems "magnolias, roses, and amaranths," and pronounces his esteem a distinction greater than monarchs hold it in their power to bestow. Yet probably nine out of ten who shall read these lines will have to consult a biographical dictionary to find out who Hayley was; while his odd protégé, William Blake, whom the fine ladies of his day wondered at Hayley for patronizing, is now a favorite with lovers of literature and art.

It makes indeed a part of the magic of new books that no man can guess securely at their future. I remember vividly the surprise of my old friend and guide, Professor Edward Tyrrell Channing, then the highest literary authority in America, when I inserted in my Commencement oration at Harvard in 1841, a boyish compliment to Tennyson; only two or three copies of whose first thin volumes had as yet crossed the Atlantic, though these had been read with enthusiasm

by young people at Concord and at Cambridge. I, exhorting young poets with the mature enthusiasm of seventeen, bade them "lay down their Spenser and their Tennyson" and look within, and Professor Channing let it pass in the understanding that by Spenser I meant the highest authority, and by Tennyson, the lowest. This construction I refused with some indignation, for it was a capital passage of which I was quite proud and which had been written by my elder sister. When I explained my real views as to Tennyson, the kindly professor said, "Ah, that is a different thing. I wish you to say what you think. I regard Tennyson as a great calf, but you are entitled to your own opinion." Such instances show us that forecast in literature is not easy even for those whose opportunities for forming a sound judgment are exceptional.

It is interesting to note in this connection that in estimating contemporary English writers during the nineteenth century, The American Verdict. America was more just than England. The successive leaders of English literature, such as Lamb, Carlyle, Tennyson and Browning, were apt to be recognized first in

America. Shelley tells us how utterly ignored Charles Lamb was in his prime by the English public, and Willis tells us that it was not so in America. He says in his *Letters from under a Bridge* — his only thoroughly attractive book — “How profoundly dull was England to the merits of Charles Lamb until he died. . . . America was posterity to him. The writings of all our young authors were tinctured with imitation of his style, when in England (as I personally know) it was difficult to light upon a person who had read *Elia*.” It was an American, Charles Stearns Wheeler, one of Emerson’s early disciples, who collected in the Athenæum library the scattered numbers of *Fraser’s Magazine*, thus bringing together the fragments of *Sartor Resartus*, which was published in a volume in Boston before it appeared in that form in England. The same Charles Wheeler went to England soon after and bore to Tennyson the urgent request of his American admirers that he would reprint his early volumes; which he did in the two-volume edition which appeared in 1842. The cheap, early, double-columned [1841] edition of Browning’s *Bells and Pomegranates* found sub-

scribers in Boston at a time when, as Browning himself told me, it attracted no attention in London; and Margaret Fuller wrote a notice of *Paracelsus* and *Pippa Passes* in the *Dial*, at a time when no such notice had yet appeared in Europe. If there was such a thing as literary foresight during the past century, its fountain was to be found in the New World, not the Old.

In speaking of the soundness of the judgment of the American public, one cannot, of course, include the vast number of people who read some sort of books. In this country the authors who have achieved the most astounding popular successes, are, as a rule, absolutely forgotten. I can remember when Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., received by far the largest salary yet paid to any American writer, and Dr. J. H. Robinson spent his life in trying to rival him. The vast evangelical constituency which now reads *Ben Hur* then read Ingraham's *Prince of the House of David*; the boys who now pore over Henty would then have had Mayne Reid. Those who enjoy Gunter would have then read, it is to be presumed, the writings of Mr. J. W. Buel, whose very name will be, to most

readers of to-day, unknown. His *Beautiful Story* reached a sale of nearly three hundred thousand copies in two years; his *Living World* and *The Story of Man* were sold to the number of nearly two hundred and fifty thousand each, and were endorsed by Gladstone and Bismarck. This was only fifteen years ago, for in 1888 he received for copyright \$33,000 and in 1889 \$50,000; yet one rarely finds any book of reference or library catalogue that contains his name. Is it not better to be unknown in one's lifetime, and yet live forever by one poem, like Blanco White with his sonnet called *Life and Light*, or by one saying, like Fletcher of Saltoun, with his "I care not who makes the laws of a people, so I can make its ballads," than to achieve such evanescent splendors as this?

One thing the larger public is likely to do. It is a fortunate fact that popular judgment, even at the time, is apt to fix upon some one poem by each poet, for instance, and connect the author with that poem inseparably thenceforward. Fate appears to assign to each some one boat, however small, on which his fame may float down towards immortality, even if it never attains it. This is the case,

for instance, with Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*, Holmes's *Chambered Nautilus*, Whittier's *Snow-Bound*, Mrs. Howe's *Battle Hymn*, Whitman's *My Captain*, Aldrich's *Fredericksburg* sonnet, Helen Jackson's *Spinning*, Thoreau's *Smoke*, Bayard Taylor's *Song of the Camp*, Emerson's *Daughters of Time*, Burroughs's *Serene I Fold my Hands*, Piatt's *The Morning Street*, Mrs. Hooper's *I slept and dreamed that life was beauty*, Stedman's *Thou art mine, thou hast given thy word*, Wasson's *All's Well*, Brownlee Brown's *Thalatta*, Ellery Channing's *To-morrow*, Harriet Spofford's *In a Summer Evening*, Lanier's *Marshes of Glynn*, Mrs. Moulton's *The Closed Gate*, Eugene Field's *Little Boy Blue*, John Hay's *The Stirrup Cup*, Forcethe Willson's *Old Sergeant*, Emily Dickinson's *Vanished*, Celia Thaxter's *Sand-Piper*, and so on. All of these may not be immortal poems, but they are at least the boats which seem likely to bear the authors' names into the future.

If it is hard to make individual predictions, when we turn to the collective forecast for a nation we enter upon a larger and

doubtless more difficult subject, which the infinite possibilities of war or other national complication make harder still. No such forecast can ever go very far for a nation which has not yet clearly worked out its own destiny, does not even comprehend itself, has not decided whether it is to be a self-governing republic from end to end, or a benevolent despotism to govern whole outlying races and generations. The last generation made the discovery that American literature has a quality and a flavor of its own ; and it is not likely to discredit that discovery merely because literature itself, in the leading nations of the world, has just now held back a little to make room for commerce. The temporary disappearance of Emersons and Hawthornes in America is not more marked than that of Tennysons and Brownings in England, or of Goethes and Schillers in Germany. During the interval when great books have not multiplied, the great fortunes which are to buy books will have been accumulating ; perhaps the next race of authors will be a little better fed than those who have passed off the stage ; and yet it may be found that their work will

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not really suffer, though endangered. Meantime every nation must try the experiment in its own way and under its own conditions; some of the minor nations of the world have tried their hands at authorship during the past few years, while their more powerful neighbors have been making money; and presently England and Germany and America may take their turn again at the gray goose quill now turned into a golden pen.

So far as the collective future of American literature is concerned, it may be said, that
 Three there are three leading obstacles
 Dangers. commonly alleged, which it must overcome. These are :—

1. The alleged influence of the so-called Puritan tradition.
2. The alleged materialism of the age.
3. The mainly scientific tendency of education and thought.

Let us consider these in order :—

1. It was Matthew Arnold who maintained that the Puritan spirit in America was utterly hostile to literature and art. As to the Puritan period, it is needless to say that the forest pioneer did not compose orchestral symphonies or the founders of a nation carve

statues of one another. Thoughtful and scholarly men created Massachusetts Colony, at least, and could at most bring hither the traditions of their universities and leave them embodied in a college. Their life was only historically inconsistent with what we now call culture; there was no logical antagonism; indeed, that life had in it much of the material of art in its sturdiness, its enthusiasm, and its truthfulness. To deny this is to see in art only something frivolous and insincere. Major John Hathorne put his offenders on trial and convicted and hanged them all. Nathaniel Hawthorne held his more spiritual tribunal two centuries later, and his keener scrutiny found some ground of vindication for each one. The fidelity, the thoroughness, the conscientious purpose, were the same in each. Each sought to rest his work, as all art must in the end rest, upon the absolute truth. The writer kept, no doubt, something of the sombreness of the magistrate; each nevertheless suffered in the woes he studied; and as Nathaniel Hawthorne "had a knot of pain in his forehead all winter" while meditating the doom of Arthur Dimmesdale,

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so may the other have borne upon his brow the trace of Martha Corey's grief.

No, it does not seem that the obstacle to a new birth of literature and art in America lies in blind adherence to the Puritan tradition, but rather in the timid and faithless spirit that lurks in the circles of culture, and still holds something of literary and academic leadership in the homes of the Puritans. What are the ghosts of a myriad Blue Laws compared with the transplanted cynicism of one *Saturday Review*? How can any noble literature germinate where young men are constantly told by some of our professors that there is no such thing as originality, and that nothing remains for us in this effete epoch of history but the mere re-combining of thoughts which sprang first from braver brains? It is melancholy to see young men come forth from college walls with less enthusiasm than they carried in; trained in a spirit which is in this respect worse than English toryism, — that it does not even retain a hearty faith in the past. It is better that a man should have eyes in the back of his head than that he should be taught to sneer at even a retro-

spective vision. One may believe that the golden age is behind us, or before us, but alas for the forlorn wisdom of him who rejects it altogether ! It is not the climax of culture that a college graduate should emulate the obituary praise bestowed by Cotton Mather on the Rev. John Mitchell of Cambridge, “a truly aged young man.” Better a thousand times train a boy on Scott’s novels or the Border ballads than educate him to believe, on the one side, that chivalry was a cheat and the troubadours imbeciles, and on the other hand, that universal suffrage is an absurdity and the one real need is to get rid of our voters.

2. It is further alleged that there is serious danger to literature in a period of overwhelming material prosperity. It is a thing not to be forgotten, that for a long series of years the plain people — in Sumner’s phrase — of our Northern states, at least, were habitually in advance of their institutions of learning, in courage and comprehensiveness of thought. There were long years during which the most cultivated scholar, so soon as he embraced an unpopular opinion, was apt to find

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the college doors closed against him, and only the country lyceum — the people's college — left open. Slavery had to be abolished before the most accomplished orator of the nation could be invited to address the graduates of his own university. The first among American scholars was nominated year after year, only to be rejected, before the academic societies of his own neighborhood. Yet during all that time the rural lecture associations showered their invitations on Parker and Phillips ; culture shunned them, but the plain people heard them gladly. The home of real thought was outside, not inside, the college walls.

That time is past, and the literary class has now come more into sympathy with the popular heart. Even the apparent indifference of a popular audience to culture and high finish may be in the end a wholesome influence, recalling us to those more important things, compared to which these are secondary qualities. The indifference is only comparative ; our public prefers good writing, as it prefers good elocution ; but it values energy, heartiness, and active service more. The public is right ; it is the business

of the writer, as of the speaker, to perfect the finer graces without sacrificing things more vital. "She was not a good singer," says some novelist of his heroine, "but she sang with an inspiration such as good singers rarely indulge in." Given those positive qualities, and it may be justly claimed that a fine execution does not hinder acceptance in America, but rather aids it. Where there is beauty of execution alone, a popular audience, even in America, very easily goes to sleep. And in such matters, as the French actor, Samson, said to the young dramatist, after snoring during the reading of his new play, "Sleep is an opinion."

And this brings us to the conclusion, that while the enormous material and business life now developing is sometimes feared as a substitute for literature, it may yet prove its ultimate friend and promoter. Perhaps it may be found that the men who are contributing most to raise the tone of American literature are the men who have never yet written a book, and have scarcely time to read one, but by their heroic energies in other spheres are providing materials from which a national literature shall one day be

built. The man who constructs a great mechanical work helps literature, for he gives a model which shall one day inspire us to construct literary works as great. We do not wish to be forever outdone by the iron machinery of Pittsburg or the grain elevators of Chicago. We have hardly yet arrived at our literature, — other things must come first; we are busy with our railroads, perfecting the vast alimentary canal by which the nation assimilates raw immigrants at the rate of a million a year. We are not yet producing, we are digesting; food now, literary composition by-and-by; Shakespeare did not write *Hamlet* at the dinner table. It is of course impossible to explain this to foreigners, and they still talk of composing, while we talk of dining.

If the judgment of another nation is, as it has been called, that of a “contemporary Transatlantic posterity,” it is worth while to consider what sort of American literary product has excited the widest interest abroad. The greatest transatlantic successes of this kind which American novelists have yet attained — those won by Cooper and Mrs. Stowe — have come through a daring Amer-

icanism of subject, which introduced in each case a new figure to the European world, — first the Indian, then the negro. Whatever the merit of the work, it was plainly the theme which conquered. Bret Harte's popularity in England is due to the same cause; and there are other instances which come readily to mind. Such successes are little likely to be repeated, for they were based on temporary situations, never to recur. The mere oddities or exceptions of American life have now been pretty fully presented to the world. A far higher task remains to be fully accomplished, the presentation in literature, not of American types alone, but of the American spirit.

To analyze combinations of character that only our national life produces, to portray dramatic situations that belong to a clearer social atmosphere, — this is the higher Americanism. Of course, to cope with such things in such a spirit is less easy than to describe a foray or a tournament, or indefinitely to multiply such still-life pictures as the stereotyped English or French society affords; but the thing when once done is an incomparably nobler achievement for the American artist.

It may be centuries before it is done. No matter ; it will be done.

It is a satisfaction to observe that the instinctive movement which is establishing American fiction, not in one locality alone, but on a field broad as the continent, unconsciously recognizes this one principle, — the essential dignity and worth of the individual man. This is what enables it to dispense with the mechanism of separate classes, and to reach human nature itself. When we look at the masters of English fiction, Scott and Jane Austen, we notice that in scarcely one of their novels does one person ever swerve on the closing page from the precise social position he has held from the beginning. Society in their hands is fixed, not fluid. Of course, there are a few concealed heirs, a few revealed strawberry leaves, but never any essential change. I can recall no real social promotion in all the Waverley novels except where Halbert Glendenning weds the maid of Avenel, and there the tutelary genius disappears singing, —

“ The churl is lord, the maid is bride ; ”

and it proved necessary for Scott to write a

sequel, explaining that the marriage was on the whole a rather unhappy one, and that luckily the pair had no children. Not that Scott did not appreciate with the keenest zest his own Jeannie Deanses and Dandie Dinmonts, but they must keep their place; it is not human nature they vindicate, but only peasant virtue. Such virtue vanishes from the foreground when the peasant is a possible president; and what takes its place is the study of individual manhood and womanhood.

3. There remains the fear, even among cultivated lovers of literature, that American intellect is pledged too firmly to science. Literature represents a world outside of science, and one which competes with it, in due modesty, for the rule of the human mind. It is commonly claimed that the balance at present is inclining in favor of science and away from literature. It is, indeed, claimed for science that it is exclusively to rule the world. An accomplished German savant, long resident in this country, Baron Osten Sacken, once remarked that in his opinion poetry was already quite superseded, and music and art must soon follow. Literature, he thought,

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would only endure, if at all, as a means of preserving the results of science, probably in the shape of chemical formulæ. He was a most agreeable man, who always complained that he had made a fatal mistake in his career, through rashly taking the whole of the *Diptera*, or two-winged insects, for his scientific task; whereas to take charge of a single genus of insects would have been enough, he thought, for the life-work of a judicious man. Personally he should have selected the mosquito.

We smile at this as an extravagance, to be classed with the repining of that German professor who reproached himself, on his death bed, with having wasted his life by attempting too much in studying both the aorists, or indefinite tenses, of the Greek verb, whereas if he had concentrated himself wholly on the second aorist he might have been of some real use in the world. But we have by the direct confession of the great leader of modern science, the noble and large-minded Darwin, an instance of almost complete atrophy of one whole side of the mind at the very time when its scientific action was at its highest point. Up to the age of thirty,

Darwin tells us, he took intense delight in poetry — Milton, Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, and Shelley — while he read Shakespeare with supreme enjoyment. Pictures and music also gave him much pleasure. But at sixty-seven he writes that “for many years he cannot endure to read a line of poetry ;” that he has lately tried Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated him ; and that he has lost almost all taste for pictures and music. This he records, not with satisfaction, but with “great regret ;”¹ he would gladly have it otherwise, but cannot. It is simply that one whole side of his intellectual being was paralyzed ; a loss which all the healthy enjoyment of the other side of nature could scarcely repay. Yet it is possible that the lesson of Darwin’s limitations may be scarcely less valuable than that of his achievements. By his strength he revolutionized the world of science. By his weakness he gave evidence that there is a world outside of science.

It is easy to cite the testimony of other high scientific authorities to the essential one-sidedness of the exclusively scientific mind.

¹ *Life*, by his son. Am. ed. pp. 30, 81.

The late Clarence King, formerly Director of the United States Geological Survey, wrote thus, shortly before his death: ¹ "With all its novel powers and practical sense, I am obliged to admit that the purely scientific brain is miserably mechanical; it seems to have become a splendid sort of self-directed machine, an incredible automaton, grinding on with its analyses or constructions. But for pure sentiment, for all that spontaneous, joyous Greek waywardness of fancy, for the temperature of passion and the subtle thrill of ideality, you might as well look to a cast-iron derrick." For all these, then, we must come back, by the very testimony of those scientific leaders who would seek to be whole men also, to the more flexible point of view, to the works of creative imagination, — to literature, in short.

Literature is, as Wordsworth said of poetry in particular, not science, but "the antithesis of science." If there be an intellectual world outside of science, where is the boundary-line of that world? We pass this line, it would seem, whenever we enter the realm usually

Literature
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Science.

¹ See *Book and Heart*, p. 32.

called intuitive or inspirational; a realm whose characteristic it is that it is not subject to processes or measurable by tests. The yield of this outer world may be as real as that of the scientific world, but its methods are not traceable, nor are its achievements capable of being duplicated by the mere force of patient will. Keats, in one of his fine letters, classifies the universe, and begins boldly with "things real, as sun, moon, and passages of Shakespeare." Sun and moon lie within the domain of science; not long since, to speak of one instance, came that extraordinary discovery which has revealed in the bright star Algol a system of three and perhaps four stellar bodies, revolving round each other and influencing each other's motions, and this at a distance so great that the rays of light which reveal them left their home fifty years ago. The imagination is paralyzed before a step so vast; yet it all lies within the domain of science, while science can no more tell us how Macbeth or Hamlet came into existence than if the new astronomy had never been born. It is as true of the poem as of the poet — *Nascitur, non fit*. We cannot even define what poetry

is; and Thoreau remarks that there never yet was a definition of it so good but the poet would proceed to disregard it by setting aside all its requisitions.

Shelley says that a man cannot say, “‘I will compose poetry.’ The greatest poet even cannot say it, for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the color of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure.”¹ In a like vein Schiller wrote to Körner that what impressed him when he sat down to write was usually some single impulse or harmonious tone, and not any clear notion of what he proposed writing. “These observations,” he says, “arise from an *Ode to Light* with which I am now busy. I have as yet no idea what the poem will be, but a presentiment; and yet I can promise beforehand that it will be successful.”² We have self-revelations

¹ Defense of Poetry in *Essays and Letters* (Am. ed.), i. 56.

² Correspondence of Schiller and Körner.

from Mozart, altogether parallel to these, in regard to the process of composing music.

Such manifestations of genius are necessarily rare, and are, in the long run, the outcome, even more than the impelling force, of a firm and wholesome way of life. Libraries, galleries, museums, and fine buildings, with all their importance, are all secondary to that great human life of which they are, indeed, only the secretions or appendages. "My Madonnas" — thus wrote that recluse woman of genius, Emily Dickinson — "are the women who pass my house to their work, bearing Saviours in their arms." Words wait on thoughts, thoughts on life; and after these, technical training is an easy thing. "The *art* of composition," wrote Thoreau, "is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle, and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind them."

Out of our strong forward-bearing American life, with its apparent complications, and its essential simplicity, is to come, The Con- some day, a purer national expres- clusion. sion than we have yet known. We are still in allegiance to Europe for a thousand things, for traditions, for art, for scholarship. For

many years we must yet go thither, as did Robinson Crusoe to his wreck, for many of the very materials of living. But materials take their value from him who uses them, and that wreck would have long since passed from memory had there not been a Robinson Crusoe.

The brilliant and somewhat worldly Bishop Wilberforce was once pointed out to me, riding in the Park at London, as I walked with Carlyle and Froude thirty years ago ; and it was perhaps they who told me a story which the Bishop loved to tell of himself, as to the rebuke he once received from a curate whom he had reproved. The curate was given to fox-hunting, and when the bishop once reproved him and said it had a worldly appearance, " Not more worldly," the curate replied, " than a certain ball at Blenheim Palace " at which the bishop had been present. The bishop explained that he was staying in the house, to be sure, but was never within three rooms of the dancing. " Oh ! if it comes to that, your lordship," said the curate, " I never am within three fields of the hounds."

Grant that nowhere in America have we yet got within those three fields, — we will

not say of Shakespeare, but of Goethe, of Voltaire, even of Heine, — the hunt has at least been interesting, and we know not what to-morrow may bring forth. Matthew Arnold indignantly protested against regarding Emerson as another Plato, but thought that if he were to be classed with Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus, a better case might be made out ; and certainly that is something, while we wait for the duplicate Plato to be born. Our new literature must express the spirit of the New World. We need some repression, no doubt, as the Old World has never been backward in reminding us ; but what we need still more is expression. Spenser's Britomart, when she entered the enchanted hall, found over door after door the inscription, "Be bold!" "Be bold!" "Be bold!" "Be bold!" and only upon the last door was the inscription, needful, but utterly subordinate, "Be not too bold!"

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

I

A GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS TO AMERICAN LITERATURE

(Names of living authors are omitted.)

ALCOTT, AMOS BRONSON. Born in Wolcott, Conn., Nov. 29, 1799. He established a school for children in Boston, which was very successful until the press denounced it on account of the advanced ideas of the teacher. He then gave up the school and devoted his time to the study of philosophy and reforms, and later moved to Concord, Mass., where he founded the so-called "school of philosophy," and became one of its leaders. He contributed to *The Dial* and published *Tablets* (1868), *Concord Days* (1872), *Table Talk* (1877), *Sonnets and Canzonets* (1882), and an *Essay* (1865), presented to Emerson on his birthday. Emerson had a great veneration for him. Died in Boston, Mass., March 4, 1888.

AUSTIN, WILLIAM. Born in Charlestown, Mass., March 2, 1778. He graduated from Harvard in 1798, studied law, and became eminent as a practitioner. Spending some time in England, he published, as a result, *Letters from London*, (1804). His works include *Oration on the Anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill* (1801) ; *Essay on the Human Character of Jesus Christ* (1807) ; and his most famous story, *Peter Rugg, the Missing Man*, originally contributed to the *New England Galaxy* (1824-26), of which he was editor. Died in Charlestown, Mass., June 27, 1841.

BROWN, CHARLES BROCKDEN. Born in Philadelphia, Jan. 17, 1771, of Quaker parents. He was really the first American to make a profession of literature. He first undertook the study of law, and it was not till 1798 that *Wieland*, his first romance, was published. The rest of his works followed in quick succession: *Ormond* in 1799; *Arthur Mervyn*, Part I in 1798, Part II in 1800; *Edgar Huntley* in 1799; *Clara Howard* in 1801; and *Jane Talbot* in 1704. In the mean time he had become an editor, having in charge between 1799 and 1808 *The Monthly Magazine and American Review* (New York) and *The Literary Magazine and American Register* (Philadelphia). He wrote also *Alcuin, a Dialogue on the Rights of Women* (1797); several political pamphlets; a *General Geography*; and a treatise on *Rome during the Age of the Antonines*. Died of consumption, Feb. 22, 1810.

BRYANT, WILLIAM CULLEN. Born in Cummington, Mass., Nov. 3, 1794. His father was a country physician, and could give him only a year at Williams College, after which he spent the years between 1811 and 1825 in the study and practice of law. His genius was remarkably precocious. *Thanatopsis*, perhaps his most famous poem, was written at the age of seventeen. His first creditable volume of verse, published in 1821, included *Thanatopsis* and the *Lines to a Water-Fowl*. Numerous other volumes appeared between that date and 1864. The translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were published between 1870 and 1872. In 1825 he gave up the practice of the law to become editor of *The New York Review*. A year later he became assistant editor of *The New York Evening Post*, and in 1829 assumed the editorship. This responsible position he held till his death, which occurred in New York City, June 12, 1878.

CHANNING, WILLIAM ELLERY. He was born at Newport, R. I., April 7, 1780. Here his boyhood was passed, and here he received his first strong religious impressions. Graduating from Harvard, he became an instructor in a family in Richmond, Va., where he acquired an abhorrence of

slavery ; later he studied theology at Cambridge, and his first and only pastoral settlement was in Boston. He became widely known as the leader of the Unitarians, and his numerous writings, published singly, were brought together in five volumes (Boston, 1841) just before his death ; a sixth volume being added later, and in 1872 a volume of selected sermons entitled *The Perfect Life*. A volume of selections from his MSS. was edited later by one of his granddaughters. Some of his writings on the subject of slavery are a letter on *The Slavery Question* (1839) ; a tract on *Emancipation* (1840) ; and an argument (1842) on *The Duty of the Free States*, touching the case of the slaves on board the brig Creole. He died at Bennington, Vt., Oct. 2, 1842.

CHANNING, WILLIAM ELLERY (2d). Nephew of the foregoing, and son of Walter Channing, M. D. Born in Boston. Entered Harvard in Lowell's class (1838), but did not graduate. He lived for most of his life in Concord, Mass. He published two volumes of poems, in 1843 and in 1847; and several other volumes of verse in subsequent years. His principal prose works are *Thoreau, the Poet Naturalist* (1873) ; and *Conversations from Rome*, first published in 1902.

COOPER, JAMES FENIMORE. Born in Burlington, N. J., Sept. 15, 1789, of Quaker and Swedish descent. His early life was spent in the then wilderness of New York, and after a short time at Yale he entered the navy, where he remained for about three years. The interesting descriptions which we have in his works are founded on his early life in the wilderness and at sea. His first novel, *Precaution*, appeared in 1820. He was a prolific writer, and is, perhaps, best known by his *Leather-Stocking Tales*, which are, in order of narration, *The Deerslayer* (1841), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Pathfinder* (1840), *The Pioneers* (1823), and *The Prairie* (1827). Other works are *The Spy* (1821); *The Pilot* (1823); *The Red Rover* (1828); *The Water-Witch* (1830); *Homeward Bound* (1838); *The Wing-and-Wing*

(1842); and *Afloat and Ashore* (1844). Died at Cooperstown, N. Y., Sept. 14, 1851.

CURTIS, GEORGE WILLIAM. Born in Providence, R. I., Feb. 24, 1824. He was in a New York mercantile house for a year, and at the age of eighteen joined the Brook Farm community, afterward going to Concord, Mass., where he worked on a farm and studied. After traveling abroad he came home, was placed on the editorial staff of the New York *Tribune*, and later became editor of *Harper's Weekly*. In 1853 he began the series of essays in *Harper's Magazine* known as *The Easy Chair*; three volumes of these *Essays from the Easy Chair* were collected and republished. Some of his publications are *Nile Notes of a Howadji* (1851); *The Howadji in Syria* (1852); *Lotus-Eating* (1852); *Potiphar Papers* (1853); *Prue and I* (1856); and *Trumps*, a novel which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1862. He stood high as an orator, and was in great demand as a lecturer. Died at his home on Staten Island, Aug. 31, 1892.

DANA, RICHARD HENRY. Born in Cambridge, Mass., Aug. 15, 1787. After a short course at Harvard College, he studied law and was admitted to the Boston bar. He was a member of the Anthology club, which conducted *The Monthly Anthology*, but without success. He was one of the founders of *The North American Review*, his first publications appearing in it as *An Essay on Old Times* and a criticism of Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets*. He also published a literary periodical called *The Idle Man*. His first volume of *Poems* containing *The Buccaneer* appeared in 1827; and six years later he published at Boston a collective edition of his *Poems and Prose Writings*. Died in Boston, Feb. 2, 1879.

DICKINSON, EMILY. Born in Amherst, Mass., Dec. 10, 1830. A recluse by temperament, she rarely went beyond her father's grounds, and, although she wrote many verses, was with the greatest difficulty persuaded to print three or four poems during her lifetime. Her *Poems* (1890) and

Poems (1892) were edited by M. L. Todd and T. W. Higginson ; and *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (2 vols., 1894) by M. L. Todd. She died at Amherst, May 15, 1886.

DICKINSON, JOHN. Born in Maryland, Nov. 13, 1732. He studied law in Philadelphia and in London and practiced successfully in Philadelphia ; was a member of the First Continental Congress and the author of a series of state papers put forth by that body. In 1788, he wrote nine letters signed "Fabius," and was the author of *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies* (1767); *Essays on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain over the Colonies in America* (1774). Died in Wilmington, Del., Feb. 14, 1808.

DRAKE, JOSEPH RODMAN. Born in New York City, Aug. 7, 1795. Left an orphan, he suffered the hardships of poverty and after a brief business career, studied medicine. At fourteen he wrote the poem *The Mocking Bird*. In 1819, he, with Fitz-Greene Halleck, contributed to the N. Y. *Evening Post* a series of humorous verses called *The Croakers*. His fame chiefly rests on his poem *The Culprit Fay*, written in 1816. *The Culprit Fay and Other Poems* was published in 1836. He died of consumption in New York City, Sept. 21, 1820.

EMERSON, RALPH WALDO. Born in Boston, Mass., May 25, 1803, of a long line of ministerial ancestors. Graduating from Harvard in 1821, he taught at his brother's school and later studied theology. After a pastorate of nearly three years he left the active ministry. With others he formed the circle known as "Transcendentalists" and soon became editor of its literary organ, *The Dial*. His volume *Nature* was published in 1836 ; his collection of *Essays* in 1841 ; *Essays, Second Series* (1844); *Poems* (1846); *Miscellanies* (1849) ; *Representative Men* (1850); *English Traits* (1856); *The Conduct of Life* (1860) ; *May Day and Other Pieces* (1867) ; *Society and Solitude* (1870) ; *Letters and Social Aims* (1875); and a posthumous volume, *Lectures and Bio-*

graphical Sketches, and collective editions of his poems, were published in 1876 and later. He died at Concord, Mass., April 27, 1882.

FISKE, JOHN. Born in Hartford, Conn., Mar. 30, 1842. He graduated from Harvard College in 1863, and from the Harvard Law School in 1865. He is widely known as a philosopher and historian. Some of his publications are *Tobacco and Alcohol* (1868); *Myths and Myth-Makers* (1872); *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy based on the Doctrines of Evolution* (2 vols., 1874); *The Unseen World* (1876); *Darwinism and Other Essays* (1879); *Excursions of an Evolutionist* (1883); *The Destiny of Man Viewed in the Light of his Origin* (1884); *The Idea of God as affected by Modern Knowledge* (1885); and *American Political Ideas Viewed from the Standpoint of Universal History* (1885); joint editor with Gen. James Grant Wilson of Appletons' *Cyclopædia of American Biography* (1886-89). He died July 4, 1901.

FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN. Statesman and philosopher, born at Boston, Mass., Jan. 17, 1706, the son of a soap-boiler and tallow-chandler. He learned the printer's trade, and then ran away to Philadelphia, where he became the editor and proprietor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. In 1732 he began the publication of the famous *Poor Richard's Almanac*. He was rather a statesman than a literary man, and filled many important public offices. The complete collection of his works edited by John Bigelow (1887-89) consists, in a great part, of letters written in a clear, business-like way upon many subjects. His *Autobiography*, printed first in French, and in 1817 in English, gave him reputation as a writer. He died in Philadelphia, Pa., April 17, 1790.

FRENEAU, PHILIP. Born in New York, N. Y., Jan. 2, 1752. He graduated at Princeton in 1771, and spent some time at sea. Later he was a contributor to *The United States Magazine* and the *Freeman's Journal*. He was editor of the *New York Daily Advertiser*, the *National Gazette*, and for a short time published the *Jersey Chronicle* and the *Time-piece*

and *Literary Companion*. At Commencement he delivered with H. H. Brackenridge a poetical dialogue on *The Rising Glory of America*, written by both, or possibly by Freneau alone. Some of his publications are *Voyage to Boston* (1774); *General Gage's Confession* (1775); *The British Prison-Ship, a Poem in four Cantos* (1781); *The Poems of Philip Freneau, written chiefly during the late War* (1786); *Poems Written between the Years 1768 and 1794* (1795); *Poems Written and Published during the American Revolutionary War* (1809); and *A Collection of Poems on American Affairs* (1815). He died near Freehold, N. J., Dec. 18, 1832.

HALLECK, FITZ-GREENE. Born in Guilford, Conn., July 8, 1790. He was for many years a clerk in a banking-house, and formed, in 1819, a literary partnership with Joseph Rodman Drake, publishing anonymously in the *New York Evening Post* a series of good-humored verses called the *Croaker papers*. His poem *Fanny* appeared in 1819; *Marco Bozzaris* (1825); *Alnwick Castle, with Other Poems* (1827). His *Poetical Writings* (1869) were edited by Gen. J. G. Wilson. He died at Guilford, Conn., Nov. 17, 1867.

HARTE, FRANCIS BRET. Born in Albany, N. Y., Aug. 25, 1839. Went to California in 1854. After attempting various occupations, such as teacher, miner, express-agent and printer's apprentice, he became one of the editors of *The Golden Era*, and later editor of *The Californian*, and *The Overland Monthly*. His first book, *Condensed Novels*, was published in 1867; *Poems* (1870); *The Luck of Roaring Camp, and Other Sketches* (1871); *East and West Poems* (1871); *Poetical Works* (1873); *Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands* (1873); *Echoes of the Foot Hills* (1874); *Tales of the Argonauts* (1875); *Two Men of Sandy Bar* (1876); *Thankful Blossom* (1876); *The Story of a Mine* (1877); *Drift from Two Shores* (1878); *The Twins of Table Mountain, and Other Stories* (1879); *Flip, and Found at Blazing Star* (1882); *In the Carquinez Woods* (1883); *On the Frontier* (1884); *By*

Shore and Sedge (1885) ; *Maruja, a Novel* (1885) ; *Snow-Bound at Eagle's* (1886) ; *A Millionnaire of Rough and Ready* (1887) ; *The Queen of the Pirate Isle*, for children (1887) ; *The Argonauts of North Liberty* (1888) ; *A Phyllis of the Sierras* (1888) ; *Cressy* (1889) ; *The Heritage of Dedlow Marsh* (1889) ; *A Waif of the Plains* (1890) ; and a second series of *Condensed Novels* (1902). He died at Red House, Camberley, in Surrey, Eng., May 6, 1902.

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL. Born in Salem, Mass., July 4, 1804, of Puritan stock. He was of an imaginative and sensitive temperament, and after graduating from Bowdoin College in 1825, spent twelve years in Salem in retirement, reading and writing continually. His first novel, *Fanshawe*, appeared anonymously in 1826 ; then he became editor of the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, and contributed stories to the *Token*, the *New England Magazine*, *The Knickerbocker*, and the *Democratic Review*. *Twice-Told Tales* came out in 1837 ; second volume of *Twice-Told Tales* (1845) ; *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846) ; *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) ; *The House of Seven Gables* (1851) ; *The Wonder Book* (1851) ; *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) ; *A Campaign Life of Franklin Pierce* (1852) ; and *Tanglewood Tales* (1853) ; *The Marble Faun* (1860) ; *Our Old Home* (1863). The unfinished works published after his death were *The Dolliver Romance*, *Septimius Felton* and *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret*. His *American and English Note-Books* and *French and Italian Note-Books* were posthumously edited by his wife. During this time he occupied several government positions. Died at Plymouth, N. H., May 18, 1864.

HAYNE, PAUL HAMILTON. Born in Charleston, S. C., Jan. 1, 1830. He graduated at the College of South Carolina and studied law, but gave up legal practice for literature, and was the editor of *Russell's Magazine* and the *Charleston Literary Gazette*, contributing also to the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He served in the Confederate army

until his health failed. In feeble health, he yet wrote much, and was the author of *Poems* (1855); *Sonnets and Other Poems* (1857); *Avolio, a Legend of the Island of Cos* (1859); *Legends and Lyrics* (1872); *The Mountain of the Lovers, and Other Poems* (1873); *Life of Robert Y. Hayne* (1878); *Life of Hugh S. Legaré* (1878); and *Poems, Complete Edition* (1882). He died at Copse Hill, Forest Station, Ga., July 6, 1886.

HOLLAND, JOSIAH GILBERT. Born in Belchertown, Mass., July 24, 1819. Graduating from the Berkshire Medical College at Pittsfield, Mass., in 1844, he contributed to the *Knickerbocker*, became associate editor of the *Springfield Republican*, and published his *History of Western Massachusetts* in 1855; then followed *Timothy Titcomb's Letters to Young People, Married and Single* (1858); *Bitter Sweet, a Poem in Dramatic Form* (1858); *Miss Gilbert's Career* (1860); *Lessons in Life* (1861); *Letters to the Joneses* (1863); *Plain Talks on Familiar Subjects* (1865); *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (1865); *Kathrina, a poem* (1867); *The Marble Prophecy and Other Poems* (1872); *Arthur Bonnicastle* (1873); *The Mistress of the Manse, a poem* (1874); *The Story of Sevenoaks* (1875), and *Nicholas Minturn* (1876). Died in New York City, Oct. 12, 1881.

HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL. Born in Cambridge, Mass., Aug. 29, 1809. Graduating from Harvard in 1829, he studied law for a year, then studied medicine and established a practice in Boston. Some of his professional publications are *Currents and Counter-Currents in Medical Science, with Other Addresses and Essays* (1861); *Medical Essays* (1883). He is best known for his literary work, and contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* the famous papers and poems published in 1859 under the title of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*. Other publications are *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1860); *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (1873); *The New Portfolio* (1886); *Over the Teacups* (1890). His novel *Elsie Venner* was published

in 1861; *The Guardian Angel* in 1868; and *A Mortal Antipathy* in 1885. He also issued *Urania*, poem (1846); *Astræa*, poem (1850); *Songs in Many Keys* (1862); *Soundings from the Atlantic*, essays (1863); *Mechanism in Thought and Morals* (1871); *Songs of Many Seasons* (1875); *The School-boy* (1878); *John Lothrop Motley, a Memoir* (1878); *The Iron Gate, and Other Poems* (1880); *Pages from an Old Volume of Life* (1883); *Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1884); *Our Hundred Days in Europe* (1887); and *Before the Curfew, and Other Poems* (1888). Died in Boston, Mass., Oct. 7, 1894.

IRVING, WASHINGTON. Born in New York City, April 3, 1783. At the age of sixteen he studied law, but never practiced. His first literary work, which took the form of letters, was published under the pen-name of "Jonathan Oldstyle." In 1807, he issued, with others, a periodical called *Salmagundi, or the Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq. A History of New York, . . . by Diedrich Knickerbocker*, appeared in 1809; and during the war of 1812 he wrote for the *Analectic Magazine*. The *Sketch-Book* was published in 1819. It was followed by *Bracebridge Hall* (1822); *Tales of a Traveller* (1824); *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828); *Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829); *The Alhambra* (1832); *Tour on the Prairies* (1835); *Astoria* (1836); *Adventures of Captain Booneville* (1837); his complete works (1848-50); *Mahomet and His Successors* (1849-50); *Oliver Goldsmith, a Biography* (1849); *Wolfert's Roost, and Other Papers* (1855); *Life of George Washington* (1855-59). Died at Sunnyside, Irvington, N. Y., Nov. 28, 1859.

JACKSON, HELEN FISKE (HUNT). Born in Amherst, Mass., Oct. 18, 1831. She was the daughter of Prof. Nathan W. Fiske, and married in October, 1852, Capt. Edward B. Hunt, and October, 1875, William S. Jackson. Contributed poems and prose articles to the *N. Y. Nation*, *Independent*, and *Atlantic Monthly*. She was greatly inter-

ested in the Indians, and her works dealing with that subject are *A Century of Dishonor* (1881), and *Ramona* (1884); other works are *Verses by H. H.* (1870); *Bits of Travel* (1872); *Bits of Talk about Home Matters* (1873); *Sonnets and Lyrics* (1886). Died in San Francisco, Aug. 12, 1885.

KNIGHT, SARAH. Born in Boston, Mass., April 19, 1666. She was the daughter of Capt. Thomas Kemble and wife of Richard Knight, and taught school in Boston, counting among her pupils Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Mather. Her *Journey from Boston to New York in the year 1704, from the Original Manuscript, including the Diary of the Rev. John Buckingham of a Journey to Canada in 1710*, was published in 1825. Died at Norwich, Conn., Sept. 25, 1727.

LANIER, SIDNEY. Born in Macon, Ga., Feb. 3, 1842. He graduated from Oglethorpe College, Midway, Ga., in 1860, and served in the Confederate army during the Civil War. He published *Tiger-Lilies* in 1867, and was after the war a clerk, and principal of an academy, and later practiced law with his father; then became a lecturer in English literature. In 1880 he wrote his poem *Sunrise*. Some of his works are *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History* (1876); *Poems* (1877); *The Boy's Froissart* (1878); *The Boy's King Arthur* (1880); *The Science of English Verse* (1880); *The Boy's Mabinogion* (1881); *The Boy's Percy* (1881); and *The English Novel and the Principles of its Development* (1883). *Poems by Sidney Lanier, edited by his wife*, appeared in 1884. He died of consumption, in Lynn, N. C., Sept. 7, 1881.

LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH. Born in Portland, Me., Feb. 27, 1807. Graduating from Bowdoin College in 1825, he went abroad, and then became professor of modern languages at Bowdoin and later (from 1836 until 1854) at Harvard. The most important of his published works are *Hyperion* (1839); *Voices of the Night* (1839); *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841); *Poems on Slavery* (1842); *The Spanish Student* (1843); *The Belfry of Bruges, and Other Poems*

(1846); *Evangeline, a Tale of Acadie* (1847); *Kavanagh* (1849); *The Seaside and the Fireside* (1850); *The Golden Legend* (1851); *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855); *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858); *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863); a translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1867); *Flower de Luce* (1867); *The Divine Tragedy* (1871); *Three Books of Song* (1872); *Aftermath* (1874); *The Masque of Pandora* (1875); *Keramos* (1878); *Ultima Thule* (1880); and *In the Harbor* (1882). He died in Cambridge, Mass., March 24, 1882.

LOWELL, JAMES RUSSELL. Born in Cambridge, Mass., Feb. 22, 1819. Graduating from Harvard in 1838, he was admitted to the bar, but devoted himself to literature. He contributed to *The Liberty Bell*, *Anti-Slavery Standard*, and the *Boston Courier* in which the *Biglow Papers* appeared (1846-48). He issued his first collection of verse, *A Year's Life*, in 1841; *A Legend of Brittany* (1844); *Conversations with Some of the Old Poets* (1845); *The Vision of Sir Launfal* (1845); *A Fable for Critics* (1848); and *Poems* (1848). He became professor of modern languages at Harvard, was the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and was joint editor with Professor Norton of the *North American Review*. *Fireside Travels* appeared in 1864; a second series of *Biglow Papers* (1866); *Under the Willows* (1869); *Among my Books* (1870); and *My Study Windows* (1871). He was minister to Spain, and later was transferred to England. *Democracy and Other Addresses* was issued in 1887; *Hearts-ease and Rue* (1888); and *Political Essays* (1888). He died in Cambridge, Mass., Aug. 12, 1891.

MATHER, COTTON. Born in Boston, Mass., Feb. 12, 1663. Graduating from Harvard in 1678, he studied theology and became minister of the North Church in Boston. He was one of the leaders in the movement against witchcraft, and in justification of his attitude wrote *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1692). He also published, among many volumes, *Memorable Providences relating to Witchcraft*

and Possessions (1685); *Essays to do Good* (1710); but is best known by his *Magnalia Christi Americana*; or, *The Ecclesiastical History of New England* (1702). Died in Boston, Mass., Feb. 13, 1728.

MOTLEY, JOHN LOTHROP. Born in Dorchester, Mass., April 15, 1814. Graduating at Harvard in 1831, he studied at Göttingen, and occupied several public positions abroad. He published *Morton's Hope*, a novel, in 1839, and *Merry Mount, a Romance of the Massachusetts Colony* in 1849. His first historical essay on Peter the Great came out in the *North American Review* for 1845. *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* was published in three volumes (1856), two volumes of *The History of the United Netherlands* in 1860, the two concluding volumes in 1868, and *The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland, with a View of the Primary Causes and Movements of the Thirty Years' War* (1874). *The Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley, D. C. L.* (1889) was edited by G. W. Curtis. Died at "Kingston-Russell House," near Dorchester, Eng., May 29, 1877.

OSSOLI, MARGARET FULLER. Born in Cambridge, Mass., May 23, 1810. Extremely precocious in youth, she became a prominent member of the group of Transcendentalists, taught, edited *The Dial*, and was then literary critic for the *New York Tribune*; went to Italy and married the Marquis of Ossoli, and was actively interested in the Italian struggle for independence in 1849. She had a remarkable personality and a natural talent for literature. Some of her published works are *A Summer on the Lakes* (1843); *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1844); and *Papers on Literature and Art* (1846). She died, by shipwreck, with her husband and child, off Fire Island Beach, N. Y., July 16, 1850.

PAINE, THOMAS. Born in Thetford, Norfolk Co., England, Jan. 29, 1737. He was an exciseman, and having been dismissed from the excise service, emigrated in 1775 to America, where his literary ability brought him the position of editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. He published *Com-*

mon Sense in 1776 ; the first number of his *Crisis* appeared in 1776 ; the *Rights of Man* (1791) and the *Age of Reason* (1794-95). Later, he became a French citizen, was imprisoned, released, and returned to America. Died in New York City, June 8, 1809.

PARKER, THEODORE. Born in Lexington, Mass., Aug. 24, 1810. He studied, taught, and then went to the Harvard Divinity School. Later he became the representative of Transcendentalism in the pulpit. His published works include *Discourse on Matters pertaining to Religion* (1842) ; *Miscellaneous Writings* (1843) ; *Sermons on Theism, Atheism, and Popular Theology* (1852) ; *Occasional Sermons and Speeches* (2 vols., 1852) ; *Ten Sermons of Religion* (1853) ; *Additional Speeches and Addresses* (2 vols., 1855) ; *Trial of Theodore Parker for the Misdemeanor of a Speech in Faneuil Hall against Kidnapping* (1855) ; a volume of *Prayers* (1862) ; and one entitled *Historic Americans* (1870) includes discourses on Franklin, Washington, Adams and Jefferson. Died in Florence, Italy, May 10, 1860.

PARKMAN, FRANCIS. Born in Boston, Mass., Sept. 16, 1823. Graduating at Harvard in 1844, he studied law, but devoted himself to literary work, contributing articles to the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, which were collected and published as *The Oregon Trail* (1849). Other publications are *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851) ; *Pioneers of France in the New World* (1865) ; *The Book of Roses* (1866) ; *Jesuits in North America* (1867) ; *Discovery of the Great West* (1869) ; *The Old Régime in Canada* (1874) ; *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV.* (1877) ; and *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884). Died at Jamaica Plain, Mass., Nov. 8, 1893.

PARTON, JAMES. He was born in Canterbury, England, Feb. 9, 1822, and came to the United States when he was five years old ; taught in Philadelphia and contributed to the *Home Journal*. Some of his publications are *Life of Horace Greeley* (1855) ; *Humorous Poetry of the English*

Language from Chaucer to Saxe (1856) ; *Life and Times of Aaron Burr* (1857) ; *Life of Andrew Jackson* (3 vols., 1859-60) ; *General Butler in New Orleans* (1863) ; *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (1864) ; *Life of Thomas Jefferson* (1874) ; and *Life of Voltaire* (1881). Died in Newburyport, Mass., Oct. 17, 1891.

PERCIVAL, JAMES GATES. Born in Berlin, Conn., Sept. 15, 1795. He graduated from Yale in 1815 and studied medicine and botany. Later he was appointed assistant surgeon in the army. He contributed articles to the *U. S. Literary Magazine* ; studied geology and was appointed to assist in making a survey of the mineralogy and geology of Connecticut, the results of which are given in his *Report of the Geology of the State of Connecticut* (1842). His poems *Prometheus* and *Clio* were published in 1822. He edited Vicesimus Knox's *Elegant Extracts* (1826) ; translated with notes Malte Brun's *Geography* (3 vols., 1834) ; assisted Noah Webster in the preparation of his *Dictionary of the English Language*, and wrote several tragedies collected in his *Poetical Works* (1859). Died at Hazel Green, Wis., May 2, 1856.

POE, EDGAR ALLAN. Born in Boston, Mass., Jan. 19, 1809. He was partly educated in England and studied at the University of Virginia, and worked for a short time in a counting-room ; then enlisted in the U. S. Army and secured an appointment at West Point, but turned his attention to literature. He was editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* at Richmond, afterward of Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine*, and of *Graham's Magazine*. He published *Tamerlane, and Other Poems* (1827) ; *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* (1829) ; *Poems* (1831) ; *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838) ; *The Conchologist's First Book* (1839) ; *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (2 vols., 1839) ; *Tales* (1845) ; *The Raven, and Other Poems* (1845) ; and *Eureka, a Prose Poem* (1848). Died in Baltimore, Md., Oct. 7, 1849.

PRESCOTT, WILLIAM HICKLING. Born in Salem, Mass., May 4, 1796. He graduated from Harvard in 1814, and would have studied law, but defective vision forbade, and he turned his attention to history by the aid of readers. His first work was *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic* (1838), and was followed by *Miscellanies* (1845); *History of the Conquest of Peru* (1847); *The History of the Reign of Philip II., King of Spain* (1855); and the *Life of Charles V. after his Abdication* (1857). Died in Boston, Mass., Jan. 28, 1859.

ROWSON, SUSANNA. Born in Portsmouth, Eng., in 1762. She came to America in 1767 with her father, Lieut. William Haswell, and later married in London William Rowson; returning to America she became an actress, and later a schoolmistress. She wrote and published *Victoria* (1786); *Charlotte Temple: or, a Tale of Truth* (1790); and *Miscellaneous Poems* (1804). Died in Boston, Mass., March 2, 1824.

SCUDDER, HORACE ELISHA. Born in Boston, Mass., Oct. 16, 1838. Graduating at Williams College in 1858, he taught for a short time, soon removing to Boston and devoting himself to literature. His *Seven Little People* was published in 1862 and *Dream Children* in 1863. He became editor of the *Riverside Magazine for Young Children* and later of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Among his works are *Stories from My Attic* (1869); *The Bodley Books* (1875-87); *The Dwellers in Five-Sisters Court* (1876); *Men and Manners in America* (1876); *Stories and Romances* (1880); *The Children's Book* (1881); *Boston Town* (1881); *Life of Noah Webster* (1882); *History of the United States* (1884); *Men and Letters* (1888). He assisted Mrs. Taylor with *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor* (1884); and was editor of the series of *Cambridge Poets*, and otherwise responsible for the making of many good books. His latest work was the *Life of Lowell* (1901). He died in Cambridge, Mass., Jan. 11, 1902.

SEDGWICK, CATHERINE MARIA. Born in Stockbridge, Mass., Dec. 28, 1789. Having an excellent education, she kept a private school for young ladies. Her first two novels appeared anonymously, and were entitled *A New England Tale* (1822) and *Redwood* (1824). Then came *The Traveller* (1825); *Hope Leslie, or Early Times in Massachusetts* (2 vols., 1827); *The Linwoods, or Sixty Years Since in America* (2 vols., 1835); *Sketches and Tales* (1835); *The Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man* (1836); *Live and Let Live* (1837); *Letters from Abroad* (1841); *Morals of Manners* (1846); *Facts and Fancies* (1848); and *Married or Single?* (1857). Died near Roxbury, Mass., July 31, 1867.

SEWALL, SAMUEL. He was born in Bishop-Stoke or Basingstoke, Eng., March 28, 1652, and came to America in 1661. Taking his first degree from Harvard in 1671, he studied for the ministry, but after his marriage had charge of the Boston printing-press for about three years, and occupied various public offices, being a member of the court which conducted the witchcraft trials at Salem. Later he became convinced of the error of his conduct in this connection and volunteered public apology for it. His various publications are *The Selling of Joseph* (1700); *Prospects Touching the Accomplishment of Prophecies* (1713); *A Memorial Relating to the Kennebec Indians* (1721); and *A Description of the New Heaven* (1727). He is best known for his *Diary*, covering the period from 1674 to 1729, published by the Massachusetts Historical Society (1878-82). He died in Boston, Mass., Jan. 1, 1730.

SILL, EDWARD ROWLAND. Born in Windsor, Conn., April 29, 1841. Graduating from Yale in 1861, he studied divinity for a time at Harvard and then taught in Ohio; was professor of English literature at the University of California, but resigned to devote himself to literary work. He is the author of *The Hermitage and Other Poems* (1867); *Venus of Milo and Other Poems* (1883); and *Poems* (1888), issued after his death. Died in Cleveland, O., Feb. 27, 1887.

SIMMS, WILLIAM GILMORE. Born in Charleston, S. C., April 17, 1806. He studied law, but in 1828 became editor and partial owner of the *Charleston City Gazette*. His writings were very numerous. Among them may be named *Lyrical and Other Poems* (1827); *Atalantis, a Tale of the Sea* (1832); *The Yemassee* (1835); *The Partisan* (1835); *Pelayo* (1838); *The Kinsman* (1841; new edition 1854, entitled *The Scout*); *Confession, or the Blind Heart* (1842); *Castle Dismal* (1845); *The Wigwam and the Cabin, or Tales of the South* (1845-46); *Areytos, or Songs and Ballads of the South* (1846); *Poems* (2 vols., 1853); *The Maroon, and Other Tales* (1855); and was editor of *War Poetry of the South* (1867). A collection of his best works was published in nineteen volumes (1859). Died in Charleston, S. C., June 11, 1870.

STOCKTON, FRANCIS RICHARD. Born in Philadelphia, Penn., April 5, 1834. He became an engraver, but soon gave up this occupation for journalism, and was connected with the *Philadelphia Post*, the *New York Hearth and Home*, *Scribner's Monthly* and the *St. Nicholas*. Some of his children's books are *The Ting-a-Ling Stories* (1870); *Roundabout Rambles* (1872); *What Might Have Been Expected* (1874); *Tales out of School* (1872); *A Jolly Fellowship* (1880); *The Floating Prince* (1881); *The Story of Viteau* (1884); and *Personally Conducted* (1889). His novels and short stories include *Rudder Grange* (1879); *The Lady or the Tiger? and Other Stories* (1884); *The Late Mrs. Null* (1886); *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine* (1886); *The Hundredth Man* (1887); *The Christmas Wreck, and Other Tales* (1887); *The Bee Man of Orn and Other Fanciful Tales* (1887); *The Dusantes* (1888); *Amos Kilbright, with Other Stories* (1888); *The Great War Syndicate* (1889); *The Stories of the Three Burglars* (1890); and *The Merry Chanter* (1890). Died in Washington, D. C., April 20, 1902.

STOWE, HARRIET ELIZABETH [BEECHER]. Born in Litchfield, Conn., June 14, 1811. She was the daughter of Rev. Lyman Beecher, and in 1836 married Rev. Calvin E. Stowe,

having been educated at Hartford, Conn., and at the Litchfield Academy. For a short time she lived at Cincinnati, Ohio, where she learned much about the condition of slaves in the South. Her experience is brought out in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was written for the purpose of convincing the North of the horrors which attended the institution of slavery. Among her publications are *The Mayflower, or Short Sketches of the Descendants of the Pilgrims* (1849); *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life among the Lowly*, which first appeared in the *National Era* of Washington, D. C., between June, 1851, and April, 1852, and was published in book form in 1852; *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon which the Story is Founded, together with Corroborative Statements Verifying the Truth of the Work* (1853); *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin, for Children* (1853); *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands* (1854); *Dred: a Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856); *The Minister's Wooing* (1859); *Old Town Folks* (1869); *Lady Byron Vindicated, a History of the Byron Controversy* (1869); *Pink and White Tyranny* (1871); *Religious Poems* (1865); *Men of Our Times* (1868); *Footsteps of the Masters* (1876); *Poganuc People* (1878); and *a Dog's Mission* (1881). Died in Hartford, Conn., July 1, 1896.

TAYLOR, BAYARD. Born in Kennett Square, Chester Co., Penn., Jan. 11, 1825. He received a high-school education and contributed poems to local papers, bringing out his first volume, *Ximena, and Other Poems*, in 1844. Some of his publications are *Views Afoot, or Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff* (1846); and many other accounts of travel, the final one being *Egypt and Iceland* (1874). Among his novels are *Hannah Thurston* (1863); *John Godfrey's Fortunes* (1864); *The Story of Kennett* (1866); *Joseph and his Friend* (1870); and *Beauty and the Beast, and Tales of Home* (1872). His books of poetry, by which he is, perhaps, best known, include *The Poet's Journal* (1862); *Poems* (1865); *The Masque of the Gods* (1872); *Lars: a Pastoral of Norway*

(1873); *Home-Pastorals* (1875); *The National Ode* (1876); and *Prince Deukalion: a Lyrical Drama* (1878). His most valuable work in verse was a translation of Goethe's *Faust*. Some of his miscellaneous writings were published after his death under the title *Studies in German Literature* (1879); and *Essays and Notes* (1880). Died in Berlin, Germany, Dec. 15, 1878.

THAXTER, CELIA [LAUGHTON]. Born in Portsmouth, N. H., June 29, 1836. Her father, Thomas B. Laughton, was keeper of the Isles of Shoals lighthouse, and here most of her life was passed. In 1851 she married Levi Lincoln Thaxter. Her works include *Among the Isles of Shoals* (1873); *Poems* (1871); *Driftweed* (1878); *Poems for Children* (1884); *The Cruise of the Mystery, and Other Poems* (1886). Died on Appledore Island, Aug. 26, 1894.

THOREAU, HENRY DAVID. Born in Concord, Mass., July 12, 1817. Graduating from Harvard in 1837, he devoted himself to literature, supplying his simple needs by surveying, carpentering, and engineering. He cared for simplicity of life and not at all for society. He and his brother spent a week in a home-made boat, a journey that found record in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849). He lived for some time in a hut which he had built himself on the edge of Walden pond, and made the experience famous in *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854). He wrote for *The Dial*, *Democratic Review*, *Graham's*, *Putnam's* and the *Union* magazines, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *N. Y. Tribune*. Some of his published works are *Excursions in Field and Forest* (1863); *The Maine Woods* (1864); *Cape Cod* (1865); *Letters to Various Persons* (1865); and *A Yankee in Canada* (1866). Died in Concord, Mass., May 6, 1862.

TIMROD, HENRY. Born in Charleston, S. C., Dec. 8, 1829. He attended the University of Georgia and then studied law, but became a war correspondent for the *Charleston Mercury* and later editor of a paper in Columbia, S. C. All his possessions were destroyed at the time of Sherman's

march to the sea, and, overcome by poverty and ill-health, he died at Columbia, S. C., Oct. 6, 1867. A volume of his poems appeared in 1860, and in 1873 *The Poems of Henry Timrod, Edited, with a Sketch of the Poet's Life, by Paul H. Hayne.*

TRUMBULL, JOHN. Born in Westbury (now Watertown), Conn., April 24, 1750. Graduating from Yale in 1767, he became tutor there and then studied law. His published works include *The Progress of Dulness* (1772-74) ; an *Elegy on the Times* (1774) ; his famous *M'Fingal, a Modern Epic Poem* (1774-82). He was associated with the "Hartford Wits" in the production of *The Anarchiad* (1786-87), and was judge of the superior court from 1801 until 1819. *The Poetical Works of John Trumbull* were published in 1820. Died in Detroit, Mich., May 10, 1831.

WEBSTER, DANIEL. Born in Salisbury (now Franklin), N. H., Jan. 18, 1782. Graduating from Dartmouth in 1801, he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and was unsurpassed as a lawyer and orator. He became U. S. representative from New Hampshire and later from Massachusetts, and in 1827 was made U. S. Senator from the latter state. Some of the best known of his public orations are those on the Bunker Hill monument, on the Pilgrim anniversary, and the eulogium on Jefferson and Adams. His most celebrated political speech is his *Reply to Hayne*. A collection of his *Works* appeared in 1851, and of his *Private Correspondence* in 1856. Died in Marshfield, Mass., Oct. 24, 1852.

WHIPPLE, EDWIN PERCY. Born in Gloucester, Mass., March 8, 1819. At the age of fourteen, he published articles in the Salem newspapers, and soon became superintendent of the news-room of the Merchants' Exchange, Boston. Eventually he gave up journalism to devote himself entirely to literature. He became known as a critic from his article on Macaulay, which appeared in the *Boston Miscellany* (1843) ; and the same year he began to lecture. He was literary editor of the *Boston Globe*, 1872-73. Among his

publications are *Essays and Reviews* (2 vols., 1848-49) ; selected lectures entitled *Literature and Life* (1849) ; *Character and Characteristics of Men* (1866) ; *The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1869) ; and *Success and its Conditions* (1871). He also edited with James T. Fields the *Family Library of British Poetry* (1878). There were issued posthumously *Recollections of Eminent Men* (1887) ; *American Literature, and Other Papers* (1887) ; and *Outlooks on Society, Literature and Politics* (1888). Died in Boston, Mass., June 16, 1886.

WHITMAN, WALT, OR WALTER. Born in West Hills, Long Island, N. Y., May 31, 1819. He was, in early life, a printer in summer and a school teacher in winter, and helped edit several country papers. He served as an army nurse in the Civil War and later held several government positions. His works include *Leaves of Grass* (1855) ; *Drum Taps* (1865) ; *Memoranda during the War* (1867) ; *Democratic Vistas* (1870) ; *Passage to India* (1870), containing his poem, *The Burial Hymn of Lincoln* ; *After All, not to Create Only* (1871) ; *As Strong as a Bird on Pinions Free* (1872) ; *Specimen Days, and Collect* (1883) ; *November Boughs* (1888) ; *Sands at Seventy* (1888) ; and a collective edition entitled *Complete Poems and Prose* (1889). Died Mar. 26, 1892.

WHITTIER, JOHN GREENLEAF. Born in Haverhill, Mass., Dec. 17, 1807. The Quaker poet had slender means, and by shoe-making and a term of school teaching earned money to attend the Haverhill Academy for two terms. At the age nineteen he had contributed verse anonymously to the *Free Press*, edited by W. L. Garrison, who encouraged the poet and became his life-long friend. Later, Whittier edited the *American Manufacturer*, the *Haverhill Gazette*, and the *Hartford, Conn., New England Weekly Review*, also contributing to John Neal's magazine, *The Yankee*, and afterward editing the *Pennsylvania Freeman*. He at first contributed most of his literary work to the *National Era* of Washing-

ton, D. C., an important anti-slavery paper, but after the establishment of the *Atlantic Monthly* he wrote mainly for that. Some of his works are *Legends of New England in Prose and Verse* (1831); *Moll Pitcher* (1832); *Poems, Chiefly Relating to Slavery* (1838); *Ballads* (1838); *Lays of My Home, and Other Poems* (1843); *Voices of Freedom* (1849); *Songs of Labor and Other Poems* (1850); *The Chapel of the Hermits, and Other Poems* (1853); *A Sabbath Scene* (1853); *The Panorama, and Other Poems* (1856); *Home Ballads* (1860); *In War Time, and Other Poems* (1863); *Snow Bound* (1866); *The Tent on the Beach, and Other Poems* (1867); *Among the Hills, and Other Poems* (1868); *Miriam, and Other Poems* (1870); *The Pennsylvania Pilgrim* (1872); *Hazel Blossoms* (1874); *Mabel Martin* (1875); *Centennial Hymn* (1876); *The Vision of Echard* (1878); *The King's Missive, and Other Poems* (1881); *The Bay of Seven Islands, and Other Poems* (1883); *Poems of Nature* (1885); and *St. Gregory's Guest, and Recent Poems* (1886); and the prose works: *The Stranger in Lowell* (1845); *Supernaturalism in New England* (1847); *Leaves from Margaret Smith's Journal* (1849); *Old Portraits and Modern Sketches* (1850); and *Literary Recreations* (1854); A final edition of his works supervised by the poet himself appeared in seven volumes (1888-9). Died in Hampton Falls, N. H., Sept. 7, 1892.

WILLIS, NATHANIEL PARKER. Born in Portland, Me., Jan. 20, 1806. Graduating from Yale in 1827, he soon founded the *American Monthly Magazine*, which later was merged into the *New York Mirror*. He had already contributed to his father's magazine, the *Youth's Companion*, and soon went to Europe, and wrote many letters about his travels which were published in the *Youth's Companion*. His works include *Scripture Sketches* (1827); *Fugitive Poetry* (1829); *Melaine, and Other Poems* (1835); *Pencillings by the Way* (1835); *Inklings of Adventure* (1836); *Loiterings of Travel* (1839); *Letters from under a Bridge* (1840);

Lady Jane, and Other Poems (1844); *Dashes at Life with a Free Pencil* (1845); *Rural Letters* (1849); *People I Have Met* (1850); *Hurrygraphs* (1851); *A Summer Cruise in the Mediterranean* (1853); *Outdoors at Idlewild* (1854); *Paul Fane*, a novel (1857); *The Convalescent* (1859); and *Poems, Sacred, Passionate and Humorous* (1864). Died at Idlewild, near Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, N. Y., Jan. 20, 1867.

II

LISTS FOR STUDY AND READING

I. GENERAL AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

(A)

- C. F. Richardson's *American Literature*, 2 vols., G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1887.
M. C. Tyler's *History of American Literature during the Colonial Time*, 2 vols., G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1878.
M. C. Tyler's *Literary History of the American Revolution*, 2 vols., G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897.
Wendell's *Literary History of America*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.

(B)

- E. A. and G. L. Duyckinck's *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, 2 vols., Charles Scribner, 1855.
E. C. Stedman and E. M. Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature*, 11 vols., Webster & Co., 1887-90.
E. C. Stedman's *American Anthology*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900.

II. SPECIAL AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

CHAPTER I. THE PURITAN WRITERS

(A)

- Campbell's *Anne Bradstreet and Her Time*, D. Lothrop & Co., 1891.
B. Wendell's *Cotton Mather, the Puritan Priest*, "Makers of America Series," 1891.
Allen's *Jonathan Edwards*, "American Religious Leaders Series," 1889.

(B)

The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse, edited by D. H. Ellis, Charlestown, 1867.

Mather's *Magnalia*, 2 vols., Hartford, 1853.

Jonathan Edwards's *Works*, Carvill (New York), 1830. (There is also a Bohn edition, 2 vols.)

Many selections from other works in this period will be found in Stedman and Hutchinson; and not a few in Tyler.

CHAPTER II. THE SECULAR WRITERS

(A)

M. S. Austin's *Life of Freneau*.

The Federalist, edited by Paul Leicester Ford, 1897.

(B)

Sarah Knight's *Journal*, reprinted in Albany, 1865.

The Diary of Samuel Sewall, Mass. Hist. Soc., 1878-1882.

Philip Freneau's *Poems*, reprinted by J. R. Smith (London), 1861.

Sneath and Trumbull's *McFingal*, edited by B. J. Lossing, New York, 1880.

Works of Fisher Ames, 2 vols., Little, Brown & Co., 1854.

CHAPTER III. THE PHILADELPHIA PERIOD

(A)

McMaster's *Life of Franklin*, "American Men of Letters Series," 1887.

Morse's *Life of Franklin*, "American Statesmen Series," 1889.

William H. Prescott's *Life of Charles Brockden Brown* (printed in Sparks's *Library of American Biography*, and in Prescott's *Biographical and Critical Miscellanies*, Lippincott, 1845).

(B)

Poor Richard's Almanack, "Thumb-Nail Series," The Century Co., 1898.

Franklin's Life, Written by Himself, edited by John Bigelow, 3 vols., J. B. Lippincott, 1874.

Franklin's *Works*, edited by John Bigelow, 3 vols., Lippincott, 1875.

Charles Brockden Brown's *Novels*, 6 vols., McKay, Philadelphia, 1887.

CHAPTER IV. THE NEW YORK PERIOD

(A)

Life and Letters of Washington Irving, by Pierre M. Irving, 4 vols., G. P. Putnam, 1862-64.

C. D. Warner's *Washington Irving*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1881.

T. R. Lounsbury's *James Fenimore Cooper*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1883.

P. Godwin's *Life of Bryant*, 2 vols., D. Appleton, 1878.

H. A. Beers's *Nathaniel Parker Willis*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1885.

E. Cary's *George William Curtis*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1894.

(B)

Good editions of Irving and Cooper are so numerous as to need no specification.

The standard edition of Bryant is P. Godwin's, 4 vols., D. Appleton & Co., 1883-1884.

For critical estimates of the Knickerbocker School, see particularly Wendell's *Literary History*, Bk. IV., vi.; and C. E. Woodberry's essay in *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1902.

CHAPTER V. NEW ENGLAND PERIOD — PRELIMINARY

(A)

G. T. Curtis's *Life of Daniel Webster*, 2 vols., D. Appleton & Co., 1869-1870.

W. H. Channing's *Memoirs of William Ellery Channing*, 3 vols., Crosby and Nichols, 1848.

H. B. Adams's *Life and Writings of Jared Sparks*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1893.

George Ticknor's *Life of William Hickling Prescott*, Ticknor & Reed, 1863.

C. H. Farnham's *Life of Francis Parkman*, Little, Brown & Co., 1900.

Mrs. J. T. Fields's *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1897.

(B)

Webster's *Works*, 6 vols., Little & Brown, 1851.

Channing's *Works*, 1 vol., American Unitarian Association, 1886.

Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, 3 vols., New York, 1843.

Parkman's *Works*, 12 vols., Little, Brown & Co., 1865-1898.

E. P. Whipple's *Essays and Reviews*, 2 vols., 1848-1849.

CHAPTER VI. THE CAMBRIDGE GROUP

(A)

S. Longfellow's *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, 3 vols., Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1891.

T. W. Higginson's *Longfellow*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1901.

E. S. Robertson's *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, in "Great Writers Series," Walter Scott (London), 1887.

S. T. Pickard's *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*, 2 vols., Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1894.

T. W. Higginson's *Whittier*, in "English Men of Letters Series," 1901.

J. T. Morse's *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes*, 2 vols., Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1896.

Horace E. Scudder's *James Russell Lowell*, 2 vols., Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1901.

(B)

Houghton, Mifflin & Co., are the authorized publishers of the works of Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Hawthorne, Emerson, and Thoreau. The standard edition in each case is the Riverside edition.

CHAPTER VII. THE CONCORD GROUP

(A)

O. W. Holmes's *Emerson*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1885.

The *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, 2 vols., Osgood & Co., 1883.

Henry James's *Life of Hawthorne*, in "English Men of Letters Series," 1880.

C. E. Woodberry's *Hawthorne*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1902.

F. B. Sanborn's *Thoreau*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1882.

F. B. Sanborn and W. T. Harris's *Life and Philosophy of Alcott*, 2 vols., Roberts Bros., 1893.

(B)

Theodore Parker's *Works*, 12 vols., Trübner & Co. (London), 1863-1865.

A. Bronson Alcott's *Table Talk*, Roberts Bros., 1877.

CHAPTER VIII. THE SOUTHERN INFLUENCE. — WHITMAN

(A)

W. P. Trent's *Simms*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1902.

W. M. Baskervill's *Life of Sidney Lanier*, in "Southern Writers Series," Barber & Smith (Nashville), 1897.

G. E. Woodberry's *Poe*, in "American Men of Letters Series," 1885.

John Burroughs's *Study of Walt Whitman*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1896.

H. Ellis's *The New Spirit*, Walter Scott (London), 1890.

(B)

W. G. Simms's *Poems*, 2 vols., Redfield (New York), 1853.

W. G. Simms's *Novels*, 18 vols., Redfield (New York), 1884-1886.

H. B. Timrod's *Poems*, 1860.

P. H. Hayne's *Poems*, D. Lothrop & Co., 1882.

Sidney Lanier's *Poems*, Charles Scribner, 1884.

Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, 1855.

Walt Whitman's *Complete Prose Works*, 1898.

CHAPTER IX. THE WESTERN INFLUENCE

(A)

This period is too recent to possess "authorities." There is an excellent chapter in Wendell's *Literary History*.

(B)

C. F. Browne's (Artemus Ward) *Complete Works*, Dillingham & Co., 1898.

Houghton, Mifflin & Co. are the American publishers of Bret Harte's *Complete Works*.

III

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

EVENTS IN AMERICAN AND ENGLISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE

ENGLISH

- 1603-1625. James I.
 1608. Milton born.
 1610. Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.
 1610-1614. Chapman's *Homer*.
 1611. The "King James" Bible.
 1616. Shakespeare died.
 1623. The Shakespeare *Folio*.
 1625-1649. Charles I.
 1625. Bacon's *Essays*.
 1626. Bacon died.
1632. Milton's *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso*.
 1642. Beginning of Civil War.
 Newton born.
 1644. Milton's *Areopagitica*.
 1649. Charles I. executed.
 1649-1660. The Commonwealth.
1658. Cromwell died.
 1660-1685. Charles II.
 1663-1678. Butler's *Hudibras*.
 1667. Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
 Swift born.
 1670. Dryden Poet-Laureate.
 1671. Milton's *Paradise Regained*,
 and *Samson Agonistes*.
 1674. Milton and Herrick died.
 1678-1684. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.
 1685-1688. James II.
 1688. The English Revolution.
 Pope and Gay born.
 1700. Dryden died.
 Thomson born.
 1703-1714. Queen Anne.
 1704. Swift's *Battle of the Books* and
Tale of a Tub.
 1707. Union of Scotland and England.
 Fielding born.
 1709. *The Tattler*, edited by Steele.

AMERICAN

1607. Landing at Jamestown.
 1608. John Smith's *True Relation*.
1620. Landing of the Pilgrims at
 Plymouth.
 William Bradford's *History of
 Plymouth Plantation*.
 1626. George Sandys's Translation of
 the first fifteen books of
 Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.
 1630-1648. John Winthrop's *History
 of New England*.
 1640. The *Bay Psalm Book* by Rich-
 ard Mather, John Eliot, etc.
 (The first book printed in America.)
 1647. Nathaniel Ward's *The Simple
 Cobbler of Agawam*.
 1650. Anne Bradstreet's *The Tenth
 Muse lately sprung up in
 America*.
 1662. Michael Wigglesworth's *The
 Day of Doom*.
 1664. New Amsterdam became New
 York.
- 1673-1729. Samuel Sewall's *Diary*.
 1675. King Philip's War.
1682. Philadelphia founded by Penn.
1689. Cotton Mather's *Memorable
 Providences*.
 1702. Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*.
1706. Franklin born.

1711. *The Spectator*, edited by Addison.
 Pope's *Essay on Criticism*.
 1714-1727. George I.
 1715. First four books of Pope's translation of the *Iliad*.
 1719. Addison died.
 Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Part I.
 1726. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.
 1727-1760. George III.
1759. Johnson's *Rasselas*.
 Burns born.
 1760-1820. George III.
 1765. Percy's *Reliques*.
 1766. Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*.
 1768. Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.
 Gray's *Poems*.
1774. Goldsmith died.
 Southey born.
 Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son*.
 1775. Burke's speech *On Conciliation*.
 Sheridan's *The Rivals*.
1776. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.
1778. Miss Burney's *Evelina*.
1783. Crabbe's *The Village*.
 1785. Cowper's *The Task*.
1791. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.
 1793. Burns's *Poems*.
 1795. Carlyle and Keats born.
 1796. Coleridge's *Poems*.
 1800. Miss Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*.
 Cowper died.
 Macaulay born.
 1803. War with France.
 1805. Battle of Trafalgar.
 Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.
 1807. Wordsworth's *Poems*.
 1809. Tennyson, Browning, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning born.
 1811. Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.
 1813. Shelley's *Queen Mab*.
1729. William Byrd's *History of the Dividing Line*.
 1732. Washington born.
 Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* begun.
 1745. Braddock defeated.
 1754. Jonathan Edwards's *Freedom of the Will*.
 1764. Otis's *Rights of the British Colonies*.
 1766. The Stamp Act repealed.
 1770. The Boston Massacre.
 1771. Franklin's *Autobiography* (incomplete).
 1773. The "Boston Tea-Party."
 1774. First Continental Congress.
1775. Battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill.
 John Trumbull's *McFingal* (Canto 1).
 1776. Declaration of Independence.
 Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.
 Boston evacuated by the British.
 1777. Surrender of Burgoyne.
 1779. Hopkinson's *Battle of the Kegs*.
 1781. Surrender of Cornwallis.
 1782. Independence of America acknowledged by England.
 1787. The Federal Constitution framed.
 1789. Washington inaugurated.
 1790. Mrs. Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*.
 1795. Philip Freneau's *New Poems*.
 1798. Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*.
 1801. Brown's *Edgar Huntley*, *Clara Howard*, and *Jane Talbot*.
 1803. Louisiana Purchase.
1807. Joel Barlow's *The Columbiad*.
 1809. Fisher Ames's *Speeches and Writings*.
 Lincoln born.
 Irving's *Knickerbocker's History of New York*.
 1812. War with England.

1814. Wordsworth's *The Excursion*.
Scott's *Waverley*.
1815. Battle of Waterloo.
1817. Keats's *Poems*. Coleridge's
Biographia Literaria.
- 1820-1830. George IV.
1821. De Quincey's *Confessions of
an English Opium Eater*.
- 1822-1824. Lamb's *Essays of Elia*.
- 1824-1828. Landor's *Imaginary Con-
versations*.
1826. E. B. Browning's *Poems*.
1829. Catholic Emancipation Act.
1830. Tennyson's *Poems, Chiefly Lyr-
ical*.
1832. Reform Bill passed.
1833. R. Browning's *Pauline*.
Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*.
1836. Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*.
- 1837-1900. Victoria.
1841. Robert Peel Prime Minister.
Punch established.
1842. Darwin's *Coral Reefs*.
1843. Wordsworth Poet-Laureate.
Macaulay's *Essays*.
- 1843-1860. Ruskin's *Modern Paint-
ers*.
1846. Repeal of Corn Laws.
1847. Miss Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.
Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.
- 1848-1876. Macaulay's *History of
England*.
1850. Wordsworth died.
Tennyson Poet-Laureate.
Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.
1852. Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*.
1853. Kingsley's *Hypatia*.
1814. Peace with England.
1817. Monroe President.
1820. Irving's *Sketch Book*.
1821. Bryant's *Poems*.
Cooper's *The Spy*.
James G. Percival's *Poems*.
R. H. Dana's *Dying Buccaneer*.
1826. Longfellow's *Poems*.
1827. Fitz-Greene Halleck's *Poems*.
Miss Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*.
N. P. Willis's *Sketches*.
1830. W. E. Channing's *Discourses,
Reviews, and Miscellanies*.
1831. Whittier's *Legends of New
England*.
1833. Poe's *MS. found in a Bottle*.
1835. Drake's *The Culpit Fay and
Other Poems*.
Emerson's *Historical Discourse
at Concord*.
W. G. Simms's *The Yemassee
and The Partisan*.
1836. Holmes's *Poems*.
1837. Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isa-
bella*.
1838. Hawthorne's *Fanshawe*.
1839. Longfellow's *Voices of the
Night*.
1840. Cooper's *The Pathfinder*.
R. H. Dana, Jr.'s, *Two Years
Before the Mast*.
1841. Emerson's *Essays, First Series*.
Cooper's *The Deerslayer*.
1844. Emerson's *Essays, Second Se-
ries*.
Lowell's *Poems*.
1845. Poe's *The Raven, and Other
Poems*.
War with Mexico.
1847. Longfellow's *Evangeline*.
1848. Peace with Mexico.
Gold discovered in California.
E. P. Whipple's *Essays and
Reviews*.
Lowell's *A Fable for Critics
and The Biglow Papers*,
First Series.
1849. Parkman's *The California and
Oregon Trail*.
George Ticknor's *History of
Spanish Literature*.
Whittier's *Voices of Freedom*.
1850. Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*.
Webster's Seventh of March
Speech.
1851. Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's
Cabin*.
1853. Curtis's *Potiphar Papers*.

- 1854-1856. Crimean War.
 1855. Matthew Arnold's *Poems*.
 1857. Indian Mutiny.
 1859. Darwin's *Origin of Species*.
 George Eliot's *Adam Bede*.
 1862. Spencer's *First Principles*.
 1864. Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*.
 Newman's *Apologia*.
 1865. Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*.
 1866. Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*.
 1867. Disraeli Prime Minister.
 Parliamentary Reform Bill.
 1868. Browning's *The Ring and the Book*.
 Gladstone Prime Minister.
 1870. D. G. Rossetti's *Poems*.
 1873. Walter Pater's *Studies in the Renaissance*.
 J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*.
 1874. Green's *Short History of the English People*.
 1878. Hardy's *Return of the Native*.
 1879. Meredith's *The Egoist*.
 1881. D. G. Rossetti's *Ballads and Sonnets*.
 Stevenson's *Virginibus Puerisque*.
 Carlyle died.
 1885. Austin Dobson's *At the Sign of the Lyre*.
 1887. Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*.
 Matthew Arnold died.
 1888. Bryce's *The American Commonwealth*.
 1889. Browning died.
 1892. Tennyson died.
 1899. South African War.
 1901. Queen Victoria died.
 1854. Thoreau's *Walden*.
 1855. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.
 Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.
 1857. The Dred Scott Decision.
 Atlantic Monthly founded.
 1858. Holmes's *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.
 Lincoln-Douglas Debates.
 1859. John Brown's Raid.
 1860. Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*.
 Stedman's *Poems, Lyric and Idyllic*.
 1861. Lincoln President.
 Confederacy organized.
 Beginning of the War of the Rebellion.
 1863. Emancipation Proclamation.
 Battle of Gettysburg.
 1865. Surrender of Lee.
 Assassination of Lincoln.
 Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*.
 1866. Whittier's *Snow-Bound*.
 Howells's *Venetian Days*.
 1868. E. E. Hale's *The Man without a Country*.
 1869. Aldrich's *Story of a Bad Boy*.
 "Mark Twain's" *Innocents Abroad*.
 1870. Bret Harte's *Luck of Roaring Camp*.
 1876. Lanier's *Poems*.
 Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia.
 1878. Henry James's *Daisy Miller*.
 1879. Stockton's *Rudder Grange*.
 1880. Cable's *The Grandissimes*.
 1882. Longfellow and Emerson died.
 1884. "Mark Twain's" *Huckleberry Finn*.
 1885. Howells's *Rise of Silas Lap- ham*.
 1891. Lowell died.
 1892. Whittier and Whitman died.
 1893. World's Fair at Chicago.
 1894. Holmes died.
 1898. Spanish-American War.
 1901. Theodore Roosevelt, President.
 1902. Bret Harte died.

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